



ROCKJUMPER

Wildlife Tours

Madagascar Nature Manitoba

1st to 15th October 2020 (15 days)



Introduction

Madagascar is home to arguably the most unusual floral and faunal assemblages on Earth and is often referred to as the 'Eighth Continent'. Its exceptional diversity has evolved over millions of years of isolation. Covering 587 000km², it is the world's fourth largest island (after Greenland, New Guinea and Borneo), yet its variety rivals that of an entire continent.

This legendary uniqueness is nowhere better reflected than in its mammals where every native terrestrial species, of which there are 148, is endemic to the island and found nowhere else on the planet! Apart from the amazing diversity of the island's mammals, Madagascar is also world renowned for its endemic birds. Of the two hundred species regularly recorded here, no fewer than 140 are endemic or near endemic. Six entire families of bird are found nowhere else! But the wonder of Madagascar extends well beyond its mammals and its avifauna to the colorful chameleons and fascinating flora of this appropriately named "laboratory of evolution". Virtually every plant and animal on the island is also endemic, but sadly most are threatened by continued deforestation, thus making Madagascar one of those "must-visit-soon" destinations.

The tour will focus on some of the most exceptional sites on the island including Perinet, Ifaty & Berenty. Our tour begins at Perinet and Mantadia. These are neighboring forest zones and will showcase the beautiful eastern rainforests where species such as Indri, Diademed Sifaka, Eastern Woolly Lemur, Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur, Furry-eared Dwarf Lemur and many others can all be found along with phenomenal birding opportunities. We will then visit the famous Didierea woodland, or "Spiny Forest" in Ifaty, where we will stroll amongst the myriad of multi-stemmed succulents, squat baobab trees and thorny scrub in awe of this botanical wonderland. Bizarre creatures make their home in this strange habitat, while the coastal areas nearby are renowned for their coral reefs and tropicbird colonies. Later on, we venture down to Berenty, a reserve comprising spiny forest and riparian forest. The landscape here offers up a different suite of species such as Ring-tailed Lemur, Grey Mouse Lemur, White-footed Sportive Lemur and the famous 'dancing' lemur – the striking Verreaux's Sifaka.

Your tour at a glance

Nature Manitoba Madagascar 2020	
Day 1	Arrival in Antananarivo (Tana)
Day 2	Antananarivo to Perinet
Days 3 -5	Perinet Special Reserve and Mantadia National Park
Day 6	Perinet to Antananarivo
Day 7	Antananarivo to Ifaty via Tulear
Day 8	Ifaty
Day 9	Ifaty to Tulear
Day 10	San Augustin and Nosy Ve
Day 11	Tulear to Berenty via Fort Dauphin



Days 12 & 13	Berenty Lemur Reserve
Day 14	Berenty Lemur Reserve to Fort Dauphin to Tana
Day 15	Tana and departure

Your tour in detail

Day 1: Arrival in Antananarivo

The Nature Manitoba Madagascar tour begins with your arrival in the bustling capital of Antananarivo, or “Tana” as it is more commonly known. While traveling from the airport, one cannot help but be struck by the uniqueness of the Malagasy culture; an unusual mixture of African and Asian influences reflected in the landscape and architecture. There may be time for some exploration of this fascinating city including a visit to a wetland reserve in the middle of the city where waterfowl and herons abound. The endangered Meller’s Duck and Malagasy Pond Heron both nest here.

Day 2: Antananarivo to Perinet

This morning we depart for the drive eastwards across the high plateau to Perinet and the famous Perinet Special Reserve. Terraced rice paddies and traditional two-storey mud homes make for intriguing scenery along the way.

Our accommodation for the next few nights is a delightful hotel, ideally located in a quiet forest setting, adjacent to the reserve. Right on our doorstep nature abounds: fluorescent-green day geckos scuttle on the outside walls of our chalets, Madagascar Wagtails flit along the paved walkways, and we may well be serenaded by the beautiful songs of the world’s largest species of lemur, the handsome Indri.



Days 3 – 5: Perinet Special Reserve and Mantadia National Park

We now have three full days to explore two very important rainforest reserves. Perinet Special Reserve is located right on our door step, while we will travel to the larger Mantadia National Park on at least one day.

In the forests of Perinet Special Reserve we can expect to be treated to a close encounter with a family group of Indri, the largest of all living lemurs. While walking in Perinet we will certainly hear their eerie, whale-like howling that echoes through the forest and if fortunate may be present with a group while they are ‘singing’. Other lemurs we may see include arguably the most beautiful of them all – the gentle Diademed Sifaka, as well as bands of Common



Brown and the shy Grey Bamboo Lemur.

Mantadia National Park receives less visitation and the lemurs are not as used to people, but it has even more species than Perinet. This is the best area to locate the beautiful Diademed Sifaka while it is also one of the few sites where the endangered Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur may be found. Other fabulous species that are possible during our visit to Mantadia include Grey Bamboo, Red-bellied and Common Brown Lemurs, while one of the local guides may well know of a spot where the nocturnal Eastern Woolly Lemur or Weasel Sportive Lemur may be sleeping during the day.



In the evenings, we will embark on night walks. Nocturnal outings are a thrilling, and indeed essential, part of any Madagascar trip; with the Perinet area being one of the very best sites to search for the island's nocturnal Lemurs. Here we will look for – and hopefully find – Eastern Woolly and Furry-eared Dwarf Lemurs as well as the diminutive Goodman's Mouse Lemur. We may also encounter some of Madagascar's other evolutionary masterpieces, such as the bizarre Lowland Streaked Tenrec.



The island's reptile and amphibian ("herp") fauna is equally fascinating, and even the most traveled naturalist wouldn't fail to be impressed by the plethora of colorful and bizarre frogs, chameleons and geckos to be seen on an evening's stroll through the rainforest. In particular, we will search for the giant Parson's Chameleon and the aptly named Fantastic Leaf-tailed Gecko (*Uroplatus phantasticus*).



Perinet and Mantadia offer the best rainforest birding in Madagascar. Over 100 bird species have been recorded and we have excellent chances for specials including Madagascar Flufftail, Madagascar Blue Pigeon, Greater Vasa Parrot, Madagascar Cuckoo, Madagascar Spinetail, Madagascar Pygmy Kingfisher, Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher, Madagascar Cuckooshrike, Ward's Flycatcher, Tylas Vanga, Madagascar Starling, Long-billed Bernieria, Spectacled Tetraka, White-throated Oxylabes, Nelicourvi Weaver and Souimanga Sunbird.

The most sought-after of Madagascar's birds are those of the six families endemic to the Malagasy region: the peculiar Mesites, exquisite Ground Rollers, Cuckoo Roller, strange Asities, incredibly variable Vangas and the Malagasy warblers. During this tour we can reasonably expect to see members of all six families. Some of the birds from these families here in the Perinet area include Pitta-like, Scaly and Short-legged Ground Roller, Cuckoo Roller, Velvet and Common Sunbird Asity, as well as many vangas and Malagasy warblers. We should also see Blue and Red-fronted Couas, our first members of the coua family which is a very distinctive subgroup of the cuckoo family.

Day 6: Perinet to Antananarivo

After a final morning in the Perinet area to catch up with any forest specialities we might have missed, we will return to Tana where we overnight.



Day 7: Antananarivo to Ifaty via Tulear



From Tana, we will take a plane flight to the southwestern coastal town of Tulear and will then transfer directly to our beachside resort in the small town of Ifaty, an hour's drive to the north of Tulear. We can bird some coastal wetland and salt pans in the area which hold a nice selection of waterbirds, including Greater Flamingos and the endangered endemic Madagascar Plover.

Days 8: 8th October. Ifaty.

Much has been written about the strange Didierea woodland, or "Spiny Forest", around Ifaty, but this in no way lessens the feeling of awe that overcomes one as we set foot in this botanical wonderland. Venturing out at dawn, before the day's heat, we will stroll amongst the myriad multi-stemmed succulents, squat baobab trees and thorny scrub in search of such spectacular birds as Running and Red-capped Couas, Archbold's Newtonia, Thamnornis, Subdesert Brush Warbler, and Lafresnaye's Vanga. It is here that we will encounter the mesite family, in the form of the bizarre Subdesert Mesite glaring down at us motionless from a thorny branch. Perhaps the most unusual bird here is the Long-tailed Ground Roller, an elusive roadrunner like ground dweller best located by its low, hooting call. Flocks of outrageous Sickle-billed Vanga are another feature of this bizarre, Tolkienesque landscape. As the day warms up so too does the reptile activity increase, and we should see the numerous Three-eyed Lizards and may be lucky enough to find a beautiful Spider Tortoise or rare Dumeril's Boa.

Another highlight of a walk in this forest is the chance to see the Lesser Hedgehog Tenrec. It is not a hedgehog at all, but an amazing case of convergent evolution. Lemurs have sadly been hunted out of this area for the most part. Recently, however, an undescribed species of sportive lemur has been discovered here and we have a good chance of seeing it, along with tiny nocturnal Grey Mouse Lemurs. We can also see a variety of bizarre insects to match the strange landscape in which they are found.

In addition, the tropical ocean off Ifaty is alive with marine life and for those who wish to explore, we will have ample time for a swim or snorkel during the heat of the day.

Days 9: Ifaty to Tulear

This morning we will return to Tulear, in the southwestern corner of the island. We can visit the local botanical garden to learn more about the strange plant



life of this area and see some more interesting reptiles and insects.

We will also make a visit to the flat-topped mountain at the edge of town, aptly named La Table. The habitat of this desolate area is known as coral rag scrub and consists of dense thorny scrubs,



Euphorbias and twisted baobabs. Our target birds in this area include two species with highly restricted ranges: Verreaux's Coua and the recently discovered Red-shouldered Vanga. Reptile life here is particularly rich and we should find large, sleek Zonosaurus plated lizards and if luck is on our side, the stunning Dumeril's Boa and endangered Radiated Tortoise.

Day 10: San Augustin and Nosy Ve

This morning we will board a speedboat for an excursion to the small uninhabited islet of Nosy Ve to the south of Tulear. En route we will stop at the cliffs near San Augustin,

where both Humblot's and Grey Herons breed annually. The main attraction of Nosy Ve, however, is its colony of Red-tailed Tropicbirds, which allow close approach as they are left unmolested by local people. We may also find Crab-plovers roosting on the sandbars here, as well as good numbers of other migrant waders and a large tern roost. We will have a chance to snorkel on the pristine coral reef encircling the island. After snorkelling we will enjoy a scrumptious seafood lunch on the mainland opposite the island and then search for the localised Littoral Rock Thrush in the adjacent coastal Euphorbia scrub. In the early afternoon, we will return to Tulear by speedboat, where we can rest up before dinner and enjoy a lovely hot shower after our exciting but salty day out at sea.

Day 11: Tulear to Berenty via Fort Dauphin

Today we will embark first on a flight to Fort Dauphin and then on a drive that takes us through some well-watered valleys packed with paddy fields, and on to the rain-shadow of the Andohahela Mountains where the octopus-like Didierea trees are diagnostic of these spiny forests. As we near Berenty the natural habitat is replaced by extensive tracts of sisal plantations stretching as far as the eye can see. Berenty Private Lemur Reserve belongs to the De Haulme family, who has set aside sections of riparian forest along the Mandrare River in order to conserve its population of lemurs and other wildlife.

Days 12 & 13: Berenty Lemur Reserve

Berenty is justly famous for its lemurs; not only because its deciduous woodland is home to six species of these primates, but also for the ease with which they can be



seen and appreciated in the wild. There are groups of Red-fronted Brown Lemur where hile White-footed Sportive, Grey-brown and Grey Mouse lemurs are regularly encountered on night walks through the reserve.



However, the undoubted favorites are the Ring-tailed Lemurs and Verreaux's Sifakas. The bands of cat-like, quizzical Ringtails are often the first to steal any visitors' hearts (as well as any spare fruit they may have on their persons!), but their appeal is easily matched by the strikingly patterned Sifakas with their soulful expressions and bizarre, bipedal dancing locomotion. To spend time with these gentle creatures

will certainly be one of the highlights of our Madagascar adventure. A further mammalian highlight of Berenty is visiting the Madagascar Flying Fox roost, where about 300 of these impressive animals sporting 1.25 metre (4 ft) wingspans spend their day squabbling and presumably sleeping. We will also be on the lookout for the numerous Giant Couas that stroll along the well-cleared paths through the woodland, along with many other woodland birds. Potential new species here include Long-tailed Cormorant, Peregrine Falcon, Madagascar and France's Sparrowhawk, Helmeted Guineafowl, Madagascar Sandgrouse, Madagascar Cuckoo-Hawk and Alpine Swift.

We will venture out in the evening in search of Totoroka Scops Owl and the impressive White-browed Hawk-Owl, but may also encounter a host of other nocturnal creatures such as the strange Greater Hedgehog Tenrec and several species of attractive chameleons such as Warty Chameleon and geckos (including the remarkable Big-headed Gecko and unique Fish-scaled Gecko).

Day 14: Berenty to Fort Dauphin to Antananarivo

This morning we should have time for one last walk around Berenty. After breakfast we return to Fort Dauphin for our flight to Tana where we will have our final overnight.

Day 15: Antananarivo and depart

This morning we will depart for the airport after breakfast for our flights home.



Financial Arrangements

The fee for the 15-day **Private Nature Manitoba Madagascar Exploration 2020** is:

- **US\$8,250.00 per person sharing** based on 4 participants & 1 Rockjumper Wildlife tour leader
- **US\$7,450.00 per person sharing** based on 5 participants & 1 Rockjumper Wildlife tour leader
- **US\$7,050.00 per person sharing** based on 6 participants & 1 Rockjumper Wildlife tour leader
- **US\$6,750.00 per person sharing** based on 7 participants & 1 Rockjumper Wildlife tour leader
- **US\$6,550.00 per person sharing** based on 8 participants & 1 Rockjumper Wildlife tour leader

The single supplement cost is **US\$880.00** and will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RWT cannot provide you with a rooming partner although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

NOTE ON DOMESTIC FLIGHT: The cost of the internal flights has not been included in the above rate. These are roughly an additional US\$ 980 per person and are based on the route Tana/Tulear/Fort-dauphin/Tana. We will happily book these flights for the group.

The tour fee includes:

- All meals in Madagascar from dinner on Day 1 to lunch on Day 15;
- Bottled Water;
- All lodgings;
- Ground transportation;
- Reserve entrance fees;
- All guide's costs;
- Local staff gratuities; and
- Services of a Rockjumper Wildlife tour leader.

The tour fee does not include:

- Visa fees;
- ANY International flights;
- Any beverages other than Bottled water; and
- Special gratuities, telephone calls, laundry and items of a personal nature.

PLEASE NOTE:



a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency. Please note that even though internal flight costs have been quoted separately, the Rockjumper office will still book these flights for you at no extra charge.

b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration a small party supplement will have to be charged.

c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.

d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader/s at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.

TIPPING:

As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, if you feel that your Rockjumper tour leader and/or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them. However, we emphasize that such tips should be at your own discretion and based solely on the level of your service satisfaction.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE DETAILS:

The main tour begins in Antananarivo on Day 1 of the tour, which is set aside as an arrival day and concludes in Antananarivo on Day 15 in the afternoon. Please ensure that your international flights leave after 18:00pm. If you would like to arrive early or depart late please do let the Rockjumper office know and we will be happy to arrange extra accommodation for you.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your **Tour Confirmation** package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

FLIGHTS:

All internal flights will be taken with Air Madagascar. Please note that internal flight delays and last-minute flight schedule alterations will always be an inherent risk on any tour to Madagascar and we may have to re-arrange the tour itinerary around the internal flight schedule. However, we will take all reasonable precautions and actions to ensure the tour follows the advertised itinerary as closely as possible. Where flights get cancelled or rescheduled, we may have to embark on lengthy road journeys, or provide the option of hiring charter flights if they are available (these are very expensive). Chartered flights, therefore, present possible extra costs to the tour, so it is imperative that you consult with your travel insurance company to ascertain what amount they may cover should the situation arise.

For international flights the main port of entry is Ivato International Airport, Antananarivo (IATA: TNR) and is serviced with regular flights from Johannesburg operated by Air Madagascar and from Paris operated by Air France. We have the capacity to advise you on the best route according to your preferences but your local travel agent will best be able to book these flights for you. We



Nature Manitoba Madagascar 2020

can, however, book the internal flights for you, and also the flight from Johannesburg to Antananarivo.

IMPORTANT: please **DO NOT** book your international flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.

Additional notes:

- It is important for your comfort and for that of your fellow travelers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kgs for check in luggage and 8kg's for hand luggage.
- Fitness: This Madagascar tour does require a reasonable level of fitness; participants should be in good general health as most of our days will be spent exploring for wildlife on foot, and may require walking for several hours at a time. Generally walking will be easy and on flat ground however some trails in the rainforest can be quite steep and slippery, especially after rain. Should you have any physical limitations or medical conditions that you feel we should know about then please notify us in advance of departure.
- Accommodation throughout the trip is of a generally good standard, and the hotels and resorts that we make use of is clean and comfortable.
- In some areas it can be hot especially at midday. We will make a number of early mornings starts to maximize the most pleasurable time in the field.

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