



Madagascar Comprehensive Birding Optional Berenty Lemur Reserve Pre-trip Extension

Day 1 of Pre-Tour Extension: Arrival into Antananarivo

- Today you will take your international flight and arrive in Antananarivo (Tana). After clearing customs you will be met by your guide and taken to the hotel. If you arrive before 1:00 PM, your guide will take you birding in the afternoon in locations near the city. The plan is to bird Lac Alarobia (see details below) until about 6:00 PM, and then go back to the hotel for supper.
- Lac Alarobia, a private sanctuary set within the city, protects large numbers of ducks and egrets. Numerous endemics and near-endemics are reported here on a regular basis. This is a great spot for the group to pull far ahead on their list of bird sightings. We should see large numbers of White-faced Whistling Ducks and Red-billed Teal. The group should also be able to identify Hottentot Teal, Knob-billed Duck and more. The Lac also supports a fantastic assortment of egrets that roost or breed in the sanctuary, including a few splendidly adorned Malagasy Pond Herons and Dimorphic Egrets.
- As evening sets, Lac Alarobia can literally fill with waterfowl. Mascarene Martin is common overhead, and we will be watching in adjacent areas for more Madagascar endemics and near endemics (which may include Malagasy Kestrel, Malagasy Coucal, Malagasy Kingfisher, Malagasy Black Swift, Madagascar Wagtail, Madagascar White-eye, Madagascar Mannikin and Red Fody).

Before 6:00 PM, we will begin the drive back to the hotel. We will likely begin supper between 6:30 and 7:00 PM.

At supper, your guide will conduct a tour orientation. During the orientation, the group should feel free to raise any questions that they have about the tour.

Before going to bed, we will review our daily bird findings on the daily bird checklist. We will also review plans for flights and the morning (including breakfast time and plans,

and early airport transfer plans). We will want to be sure to have everything packed for air travel in the morning.

Note: Madagascar flight times and plans are famous for changing; so, please be patient with confirmations on flights and airport transfer plans. We will try to minimize impact on critical birding in the event of changes, recognizing sometimes these changes play to our favor.

Overnight in Tana.

Day 2 Pre-trip Extension: AM Arrivals into Fort Dauphin, Transfer to Berenty Lemur Reserve via Manangotry

This morning you will have an early breakfast and be taken to the airport for your flight to Fort Dauphin. After a short flight you will be picked up by a local guide, and will head into the nearby Andohahela Mountains to a very special and unique area called Manangotry. This region of mid-altitude rainforest has only recently opened up and is the only site where one has a reasonable chance of seeing the recently rediscovered and highly localized Red-tailed Newtonia. This rare and endearing endemic will be the prime target this morning. We will systematically traverse the track that winds through the beautiful Andohahela National Park in search of this species. An array of exciting but more widespread species may also be encountered this morning and include the immaculate Madagascan Blue Pigeon, Greater Vasa Parrot, Madagascan Cuckoo, Madagascan Spinetail, Malagasy Paradise Flycatcher, Madagascan Cuckooshrike, Ward's Flycatcher, Tylas Vanga, Madagascan Starling, Long-billed Bernieria, Spectacled Tetraka, White-throated Oxylabes, Nelicourvi Weaver, Souimanga Sunbird, the bizarre Cuckoo Roller and flocks of Vangas that could include White-headed, Chabert, Blue, Red-tailed and Hook-billed. A special lemur that we may encounter is the Collared Brown Lemur, a beautiful and localized species that can only be seen in these south-eastern forests.



After a morning's birding at Manangotry, we will then transfer to the world-famous, private lemur reserve of Berenty. The 3.5-hour drive takes us from the wind-blown but picturesque town of Fort Dauphin through well-watered valleys packed with paddy fields and, finally, into the rain-shadow of the Andohahela Mountains, where the octopus-like trees of the Didiereaceae family are diagnostic of the xerophytic spiny forest. As we near Berenty, this natural habitat is sadly replaced by extensive tracts of sisal plantations stretching as far as the eye can see. Berenty Preserve belongs to the De Haulme family who have set aside sections of gallery forest along the Mandrare River to conserve its population of lemurs and other wildlife.



This evening we shall venture out 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 Lesser and Greater Hedgehog Tenrecs, Grey Mouse Lemur, the huge Madagascan Hissing Cockroach and several species of attractive geckos (including the remarkable Painted and Plain Big-headed Gecko and the unique Fish-scaled Gecko).

Overnight at Berenty

Day 3 Pre-trip Extension: Full Day at Berenty Lemur Reserve

Berenty is quite famous for its lemurs, not only because its deciduous woodland is home to no less than five species of these primitive primates, but also for the ease with which they may be seen and appreciated in the wild. Red-fronted Brown Lemur occurs in large numbers during the day, while White-footed Sportive Lemur and Gray-brown and Grey Mouse Lemurs are regularly encountered on night walks through the reserve, though the undoubted favorites are the delightful Ring-tailed Lemurs and Verreaux's Sifakas.

Whilst the bands of cat-like, quizzical ringtails are often the first to steal visitors' hearts, their appeal is easily matched by the strikingly patterned sifakas, with their soulful expressions and bizarre, bipedal dancing locomotion. To spend time with groups of 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 wingspans spend their day squabbling and presumably sleeping.

There are of course birds to be seen here as well, and we will be on the look-out for the numerous Giant Couas that stroll along the well-cleared paths through the woodland, and we may be lucky enough to find the dimorphic Madagascan Buttonquail as they scurry through the leaf litter. Potential new species we may also find here include Reed Cormorant, Peregrine Falcon, Frances's Sparrowhawk, Madagascan Cuckoo-Hawk, Helmeted Guineafowl, Madagascan Sandgrouse and Alpine Swift.



This evening there will be an option to embark on another pre-dinner night walk into one of the surrounding patches of remnant spiny forest in search of nocturnal lemurs such as White-footed Sportive and Grey-brown Mouse Lemurs. We are also likely to encounter the large, spiny Warty Chameleon as well as colonies of bizarre Flatid Leaf Bugs.

Overnight at Berenty

Day 4 Pre-trip Extension: Berenty Lemur Reserve to Fort Dauphin, fly to Tulear and Join Main Tour

Depending on internal flight times we may be able to get in some early birding around the lodge. Afterwards we will return to Fort Dauphin from where we connect with our internal flight to Tulear, in the south-western corner of the island. Here you will meet up with the main tour group either in the Fort Dauphin Airport or Tulear Airport, and continue on with your tour.