



MADAGASCAR: 7-DAY NORTHWEST PRE-TOUR

06 - 12 OCTOBER 2023



Madagascan Fish Eagle is one of the special birds we will be looking for on this tour.

One hundred and twenty-nine species of birds have been recorded in Ankarafantsika National Park, more than half of them endemic to Madagascar. They include **Van Dam's Vanga**, **Rufous Vanga**, the elusive **Banded Kestrel**, and the more easily observed **Madagascan Fish Eagle**, which can often be seen at Ravelobe Lake. The endangered **Humblot's Heron** can also be seen at Lake Ravelobe.

This pre-pre-tour to our **Best of Madagascar: 14-day Birding and Wildlife Tour** can also be booked as a stand-alone tour. It can also be combined with our following **6-day Masoala Peninsula Pre-tour** and, following the main tour, with our **6-day Berenty Reserve Extension**.



A Malagasy Pond Heron in breeding plumage

Itinerary (7 days/6 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Antananarivo

You can arrive in Madagascar's capital at any time today. Transfer to the hotel.

Overnight: Relais des Plateaux, Antananarivo

Day 2. Antananarivo - Mahajanga (Majunga) - Ampijoroa (Ankarafantsika National Park)

We will leave the hotel after breakfast, take our flight to Mahajanga, and eventually drive directly to Ankarafantsika (about four hours' drive), heading for the Ampijoroa dry deciduous forest. A three-night stay should allow us to spot most of the key birds of the area. En route to

Ankarafantsika, we plan to stop at Lake Amboromalandy and at rice fields to try to find birds like **Madagascar Jacana**, **Malagasy Pond Heron**, **Humblot's Heron**, the strange **Black Heron**, and others.

Time-permitting, we can spend time at Lake Ravelobe, scanning for the critically endangered **Madagascan Fish Eagle** and many other birds. Beware of crocodiles, please, and don't walk too close to the lake! We then return to the rustic accommodation, checking the trees around the "lodge" for spectacular birds, including **Sickle-billed Vanga**, **Madagascan Green Pigeon**, **Grey-headed Lovebird**, and many others. If we're not too tired, we might do a night walk tonight (otherwise the next evening), and this might generate **Madagascan Nightjar**, owls, chameleons, and nocturnal lemurs.

Overnight: Ampijoroa Forest Station, Ankarafantsika



Sickle-billed Vanga should be seen on this tour.

Days 3 – 4. Two more nights at Ampijoroa

We have another early start to visit the various sections of Ankarafantsika. Here we need to find mega-amazing birds such as **White-breasted Mesite**, **Van Dam's Vanga**, **Rufous Vanga**, the incomparable and spectacular **Schlegel's Asity**, **Red-capped Coua**, **Coquerel's Coua**, **Crested Coua**, and lemurs like the spectacular **Coquerel's Sifaka**. One afternoon we plan to do a boat trip on the lake for species mentioned previously that might have been missed.

Overnight: Ampijoroa Forest Station, Ankarafantsika

Day 5. Ampijoroa to Mahajanga

After final “cleanup” birding in the dry forests of Ankarafantsika we will drive back to Mahajanga (Majunga) - a very lively town with plenty of rickshaws. Then we’ll take a boat trip into the Betsiboka Delta, where we’ll bird the mangroves for rare species such as **Malagasy Sacred Ibis** and **Bernier’s Teal**, along with a host of tropical shorebirds, terns, and more.

Overnight: Roche Rouge, Mahajanga

Day 6. Flight to Antananarivo, Tsarasoatra Lake

Today we will take a flight to Antananarivo. After arrival we will have a birding excursion to Tsarasoatra Lake and then transfer to our hotel.

Overnight: Relais des Plateaux, Antananarivo



Red-capped Coua can be seen in the Ankarafantsika area.

Day 7. Flight home or beginning of the Masoala extension

Today either your international flight will leave for home or you will fly to Maroatsetra for the Masoala extension.

Please note that the accommodation on this pre-trip is rustic.

Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

- Duration:** 7 days
Limit: 6 – 8
Dates: 06 – 12 October 2023
Start: Antananarivo (Tana)
End: Antananarivo (Tana)
Prices: €2,985 per person sharing, assuming 6-8 participants, plus about €335 for the domestic flights, which we will book for you (2023)
Single supplements: €397 (2023)

Price includes:

Meals
Accommodation
Guiding fees
Entrance fees
All transport while on tour
Bottled water throughout the tour

Price excludes:

International flights
Return flight Tana/Mahajanga (Majunga)/Tana
Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts
Drinks
Laundry
Personal insurance
Gratuities