



MADAGASCAR: 7-DAY NORTHWEST PRE-TOUR

06 – 12 OCTOBER 2024

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

This northwest Madagascar pre-tour is designed around seeing several range-restricted Madagascar bird endemics that are not possible on the standard eastern and southern Madagascar birding itinerary. To find many of these northwestern specials we will be concentrating our time in Ankarafantsika National Park which has an impressive bird list of 129 species, more than half of them endemic to Madagascar. Some of the standout specials include **White-breasted Mesite**, **Van Dam's Vanga**, **Schlegel's Asity**, **Madagascar Ibis**, the elusive **Banded Kestrel**, and the more easily observed **Madagascar Fish Eagle**, which can often be seen at Ravelobe Lake, where the endangered **Humblot's Heron** can also be seen.

This 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**.



Humblot's Heron is regular at Lake Ravelobe.

Itinerary (7 days/6 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Antananarivo

You can arrive in Madagascar's capital at any time today, after which you will be transferred 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 **Madagascan 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 **Madagascar Fish Eagle**, **Madagascar Jacana** 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**, **Crested Coua**, **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 **Madagascar Nightjar**, owls, chameleons, and nocturnal lemurs.

Overnight: Ampijoroa Forest Station, Ankarafantsika



The unusual 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**, **Hook-billed** and **Rufous Vangas**, **Madagascar Ibis**, the incomparable and spectacular **Schlegel's Asity**, **Red-capped**, **Coquerel's** and **Crested Couas**, 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



*The shrike-like **Hook-billed Vanga** is one of the many vanga species we can see on this tour.*

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 2024
06 – 12 October 2025

Start: Antananarivo (Tana)

End: Antananarivo (Tana)

Prices: €3,313 per person sharing, assuming 6-8 participants, plus about €926 for the domestic flights, which we will book for you (2024)
€3,677 per person sharing, assuming 6-8 participants, plus about €1,027 for the domestic flights, which we will book for you (2025)

Single supplements: €440 (2024)
€488 (2025)

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