



Birders Rest

Brisbane, Queensland
Birding, Wildlife & Photography
Tours Far & Wide

Detlef Davies
PO Box 3108, Warner 4500, Queensland, Australia
(+61) 414041207
detlefdavies@yahoo.com

MADAGASCAR – 3 week tour of north & west 2 optional extensions

2020 GENERAL INFORMATION

DATES & ITINERARIES

Tour dates are tentatively as follows:

22 day tour – Saturday 24th October to Saturday 14th November 2020

Extension to Bemanevika in the remote central north for some of the rarest Madagascan birds – 14th to 19th November

Extension to the Masoala Peninsula – 20th to 23rd November

- This itinerary makes a change from the route we took on our 2018 tour and is a more adventurous one for those wishing to add variety to just birds and mammals. It takes us to different scenery (such as the 'tsingy' of parts of the western dry forests), will offer more interesting hikes and should provide better chances of less well-known species like Sakalava Rail, Tsingy Wood Rail, Fosa and Madame Berthe's Mouse Lemur.
- This 22 day tour takes us from Antananarivo to the eastern rainforest at Andasibe and Mantadia, the dry deciduous forest of the mid-western region from Morondava northwards, including the famous 'Avenue of Baobabs', the extensive forests of limestone 'tsingy' both at Bemaraha and further north at Ankarana. the remote Lake Kinkony, home of the elusive Sakalava Rail. From there we travel to the north-western town of Mahajanga, crossing the Betsiboka River by car ferry and explore the inland forests at Ankarafantsika reserve, and by boat in the Betsiboka delta. We take flights via the capital to the far north at Antsiranana from where we have access to Amber Mountain reserve. We finish the main tour either at a comfortable resort at Ramena Beach not far from Amber Mountain or at an equally cosy place on the coast of the mainland north of Mahajanga & near the offshore island group which includes Nosy Be.
- The first extension involves 3 nights camping at Bemanevika accessed from the village of Bealanana where we stay in a rustic hotel on the first and last nights and camp for the 3 nights inbetween. Our target species are Madagascar Pochard (almost confined to one lake), Madagascar Serpent Eagle, Red Owl & Slender-billed Flufftail.

- The second extension involves a journey from the capital to the north-eastern rainforest at Maroantsetra and the Masoala Peninsula, where we stay at the lovely Masoala Forest Lodge right by the beach on the west-facing Bay of Antongil. Among many target species are Helmet & Bernier's Vangas, Red Owl, Red-ruffed Lemur and Aye-Aye, along with a variety of the more difficult rainforest endemics. The rather high cost reflects the fact that we will charter the flight, the scheduled service is often unreliable;
- The main focus will be birds and lemurs but there will be plenty of other mammals, a variety of reptiles including chameleons and snakes, and many fascinating insects and spiders; also some amazing plants.
- You will get the most out of the tour by purchasing some wildlife guides (see below) and try to become familiar with some of the common species, or at least the typical Madagascan families of birds and mammals, even some of the families are endemic.
- A reasonable level of fitness is required but although there are some quite long walks, there are no mountain climbs. Some trails are muddy, rough and steep in parts. If you feel unable to tackle the longer walks, you may opt out and stay at or near the accommodation if it is a day when we are not moving on.
- Anyone interested in linking other destinations on route should let me know. Mauritius and Reunion have a number of interesting and endemic birds.
- **NOTE:** Internal flights are not always reliable and the itinerary is therefore subject to change if circumstances require it. More on this at a later date.

TOUR COST My ground agent gives tour prices in Euros.

Pax	Charge per person in EUROS
3	9750
4	9500
5	8500
6	7900
7	7500
8	7200
Single Supplement	750 Euros per single room

Tour charge includes all ground services, local English-speaking wildlife guide and expenses for a tour leader, all excursions in the reserves and parks with local wildlife guides, domestic flights Tana to Morondava & Antsiranana to Antananarivo, private flight Bemoraha to Mahajanga, all meals, transfers.

Extra if staying at Eden Lodge for 3 nights – 735 Euros per person, single supplement 130 Euros.

Extension 1 to Bemanevika

Charge per person:

3 persons – 1750 Euros

4 persons – 1750 Euros

5 persons – 1350 Euros

Single supp. 120 Euros per single room

Extension 2 to Masoala Forest Lodge

Charge per person:

4 nights in shared room – 1750 Euros per person

4 nights in shared room – 2150 Euros per person

Return flights – 990 Euros

Accommodation and transfers in Antananarivo not included on extensions.

Deposits should be paid to my foreign currency account in Euros.

Tour needs a minimum of 4 people to run, maximum number 8.

FIELD GUIDES

I recommend the following:

Birds of Madagascar by Hawkins, Safford & Skerrett – Helm Field Guides

Published in 2015, this is now the standard recommended guide for birds. It includes the Comoros, the Mascarene Islands and the Seychelles.

Apart from this there is a Pica Press guide 'Birds of Madagascar' which is a photographic guide by Morris and Hawkins; also 'Birds of the Indian Ocean Islands' by Sinclair and Langrand, published by Struik, is a nice light weight book.

For mammals you should see Nick Garbutt's book 'Mammals of Madagascar' published by Pica Press.

Nick was the leader of our 2004 trip but his book has been revised in 2007.

I will be reviewing other books (also on other wildlife) and welcome any comments from our trip guests.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please note the following:

- I will bring both the latest bird Field Guide by Hawkins, Safford & Skerrett and Nick Garbutt's Mammal Guide.
- Bring enough cash to cover visa costs, drinks, souvenirs, any other shopping, tips, etc in US dollars (preferred), Euros or UK sterling – these are easiest to change into Madagascan ariarys.
- Visas at the airport. A 30 day visa costs at present 35 Euros or 40 US\$ each, you should have the cash for this ready in one of these currencies. Visas for longer periods – TBA.
- You need to fill in a landing form before arrival.
- Airport procedure is a little slow and chaotic. You queue to hand in a health form, then to pay for the visa, then to the police check where they put the visa in your passport. Baggage reclaim and customs check are both slow too.
- We hope that our guide throughout the tour will be Claude Rambelison who guided our 2018 tour and was superb. He is a top wildlife guide in the country and has led wildlife tours for our ground agent for many years.
- Check current vaccination recommendations and those for malarial prophylactics.
- Stomach upsets are not an unusual problem in Madagascar (as in many 3rd world tropical countries). Be prepared and bring your choice of medication for this, e.g Imodium.