

Madagascar: Aye-Aye and Helmet Vanga Extension
Sept 15-23, 2024

Brief itinerary*

If you wish to arrive in Antananarivo the day before the tour starts, please let us know your flight plans and whether you will need an extra night in Antananarivo.

Day 1: Sun, Sept 15

Arrival in Antananarivo

On arrival you will be met by your guides at the airport, from where you will proceed to our hotel for the night. Here, we will have a short briefing before settling down for the night. ***Overnight in Antananarivo.***

Day 2: Mon, Sept 16

Farankaraina Reserve

We start the day with a morning transfer to Ivato International Airport in Antananarivo, from where we catch a local flight to Maroantsetra near the southwestern edge of the Masoala Peninsula. From Maroantsetra we'll embark on a short boat trip to Farankaraina Reserve, one of the best places on Earth to see the incredibly amazing Aye-aye. Once at Farankaraina, we'll need to do a 30-minute walk to our camp, from where we'll do a guided night walk to look for the Aye-aye. ***Night in Farankaraina Reserve.***

Day 3: Tue, Sept 17

Masoala National Park

After breakfast we'll transfer from Farankaraina Reserve back to Maroantsetra, from where we take a speed boat to the Masoala Peninsula. We'll reach Masoala National Park in the afternoon, and will start birding immediately, paying special attention to the sights and sounds around us to find the Helmet and Bernier's Vangas. Once we find these two species—they are possible even at our hotel—we'll spend more time enjoying some of the other feathered friends around us, with a variety of ground-rollers, tetrakas, and mesites possible. ***Overnight in Masoala National Park.***

Day 4-8: Wed, Sept 18-Sun, Sept 22

Masoala National Park

The next 5 days will be very flexible. Tour participants will have plenty of time to enjoy their first looks at many of Madagascar's unique species present around the hotel where we'll be staying. Some of the amazing birds that represent unique families we can see here include Hook-billed and Rufous Vanga, Red-breasted and Blue Coua, Short-legged Ground-Roller, and several species of tetrakas. While here, we should also keep an eye out for Red Ruffed Lemur and Moore's Woolly Lemur (both are Peninsular endemics), as well as White-fronted Brown Lemur (a near-endemic). Other wonderful wildlife to be seen include the day-flying Madagascar Sunset Moth (considered one of the most impressive of all Lepidopterans), as well as a large variety of day geckos, leaf-tailed geckos, and chameleons. We'll also do several night walks to look for owls, reptiles, and other mammals present (the scraggly Lowland Streaked Tenrec is often seen here!). Frogs are particularly well represented at night, with the Climbing Mantella (like South America's poison dart frogs, the bright colors of these frogs also warn would-be predators to reconsider) and the bright red Madagascar Tomato Frog (that puffs its body when threatened) counting among the most special. There will also be plenty of time to relax on the nearby beach, while our lodge also rent snorkeling equipment for participants who want to get closer looks at the coastal marine life around. ***Overnights in Masoala National Park.***

Day 9: Mon, Sept 23

Transfer to Tana

Our stay on the Masoala Peninsula has unfortunately come to an end, so we'll be transferring by speed boat to Maroantsetra, from where we'll be catching a short local flight back to Antananarivo. Once in Antananarivo participants will be transferred to our hotel for the night, where we'll be getting ready for the main tour starting the next day. ***Overnight in Antananarivo.***

***Order of days and accommodation may change if logistically necessary.**