



A Tropical Birding set departure tour

## Sulawesi (Indonesia): & The Moluccas Extension (Halmahera)

### *Birding the Edge of "Wallace's Line"*



**Minahassa Masked-Owl** Tangkoko

*This tour was incredible for nightbirds; 9 owls, 5 nightjars, and 1 owlet-nightjar all seen. This bird was entirely unexpected; rarely seen at night; we were very fortunate to see in the daytime. Voted as one of the top five birds of the tour.*

**15<sup>th</sup> August – 4<sup>th</sup> September 2015**  
**Tour Leaders: Sam Woods & Theo Heno**

*"At the same time, the character of its natural history proves it to be a rather ancient land, since it possesses a number of animals peculiar to itself or common to small islands around it, but almost always distinct from those of New Guinea on the east, of Ceram (now Seram) on the south, and of Celebes (now Sulawesi) and the Sula islands on the west."*

British naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace, writing on Golilo (now called Halmahera), in the “*Malay Archipelago: The Land of the Orang-Utan, and the Bird of Paradise. A Narrative of Travel, with studies of Man and Nature.*” in 1869

Acclaimed British naturalist (and co-conspirator with Charles Darwin on the development of the theory of evolution of species by natural selection), Alfred Russel Wallace spoke of the “peculiar”, and it was indeed the peculiar, or ENDEMIC, which was the undoubted focus of this tour. Birders come to Sulawesi and Halmahera to see birds you cannot get anywhere else. While the uniqueness of these species is a clear attraction all of its own, many among them are also stunning birds to boot, and are rightly revered as some of the most highly desired species in all of the region; a quick perusal of our final bird list reveals exquisite birds like **Sulawesi Dwarf-Kingfisher**, **Lilac-cheeked and Green-backed Kingfishers**, **Knobbed and Blyth’s Hornbills**, **Moluccan and Ivory-breasted Pittas**, **Purple-winged and Azure Rollers** (A.K.A “Purple Dollarbird”), **Rusty-backed (Red-backed) Thrush**, and the astonishing **Wallace’s Standardwing** (a spectacular endemic bird-of-paradise), a bird which Wallace himself was credited with the discovery of during his long expedition to the “Malay Archipelago”, (which encompassed these islands too in his definition). A list of some **280 birds** were recorded on this tour, with just a handful only heard (5 species), and many of these were seen long and well by all present, like the strange **Geomalia** (photo below), and **Maleo**, the handsome **Rusty-backed (Red-backed) Thrush**, and most of the kingfishers, including the notoriously difficult **Scaly-breasted Kingfisher**.



**Geomalia** Lore Lindu (Sulawesi)



Among the other birds peculiar to the region was a lengthy list of nightbirds, making for some long, long days, nights and dawns in the field, but it felt worth it, after we racked up **Minahassa Masked-Owl** (during the daytime!), **Sulawesi Masked-Owl**, **Moluccan and Sulawesi Scops-Owls**, both forms of **Cinnabar Boobook**, **Ochre-bellied** and **Speckled (Boobooks) Hawk-Owls** (also during the daytime!); quality looks at the oddball **Moluccan Owlet-Nightjar** (*photo page 4*); and **Satanic Nightjar** (A.K.A. "Diabolical Nightjar"), dayroosting **Great Eared-Nightjars**, and a rare co-operative **Sulawesi Nightjar** sat in our beam for a time. This was also capped off with some cool mammals, also endemic to the region, such as **Spectral Tarsiers** roosting in a large fig tree, and troops of **Celebes (Black) Crested Macaques** surrounding us while birding at Tangkoko (*photo below*)!



The main tour focused on the larger, starfish-shaped island of Sulawesi (formerly named Celebes by the first European settlers from Portugal), taking in lowland sites on the Minahassa Peninsula in the north like Tangkoko (famed especially for its myriad kingfishers), and Dumoga-Bone (famed as the most reliable place on Earth for the rare, and endangered **Maleo**); combining these with mid and higher elevations at Lore Lindu in Central Sulawesi, and also a short time in the far south, where limestone karst forest kicked off the tour a short way from Sulawesi's biggest city, Makassar in South Sulawesi. The

main tour ended at a lavish resort on an idyllic mangrove-fringed coast near Manado, before most of the group continued on for an extension to the North Moluccas and the island of Halmahera. While it only takes a short flight and boat ride to get there, it quickly feels very different indeed; after all, by crossing from Sulawesi to Halmahera, we had crossed “Weber’s Line” an imaginary line proposed by Dutch-German zoologist Max Weber, delineating the border between the Oriental region on the Sulawesi side and the Australasian region on the Halmahera side. This was quickly obvious from our time on Halmahera, the familiar birds of Sulawesi were largely gone, while others we had not seen before became quickly familiar, (e.g. **Willie-wagtail**, **Red-cheeked Parrot**, **Sombre** and **Blue-and-white Kingfishers**). The two parts are in sharp contrast to each other, but there were also commonalities; both gave us plentiful endemics, leading most people with a lifebird list for the tour well in excess of 100 birds (with some experienced ones boasting more than 150!) As well as plenty of the “peculiar”, as Wallace referred to the endemics, both legs also displayed some of the region’s most colorful and/or most wanted birds, from the odd **Geomalina** and **Hylocitrea** (a recently recognized endemic bird FAMILY no less) and **Purple-bearded Bee-eater** in Sulawesi’s highlands, to the utterly unique appearance and displays of the **Wallace’s Standardwing** on Halmahera, and the gaudy **Moluccan King-Parrot** there too, there were many unforgettable moments, leading one well-traveled birder among the group to comment that it was her “...favorite birding trip of all time”! Hopefully, this report will reveal, to some degree, why!? While it was a tiring tour, regular early starts and late finishes necessitated by the myriad endemic nightbirds as well as daytime species; however, the rewards for this were immense; (e.g. 7 species of kingfisher at one of these sites, the newly described **Cinnabar Boobook**, the rare **Sombre Pigeon**, to mention the aforementioned **Geomalina** and **Hylocitrea**, making these sites an absolute must).



Another hardship of the tour was the simple places stayed at two of the sites in particular, being the best available although these were balanced with superlative accommodations elsewhere, especially on Halmahera, where our long stay at a high end dive resort brought us not just a comfortable place to stay, but a beautiful bay to look out on from our cabins, and easily the best food of the trip, in spite of good food being a feature, even in the more Spartan accommodations.

A summary of the highlights is given below, which should illustrate quite what an exceptional tour this was: It had been a very fortunate trip, with most of the endemic targets seen, both in Sulawesi and on the Moluccas Extension in Halmahera.



Some of the many highlights included the rare “capture” of **all 4 possible megapodes** (including good views of digging **Maleos** on *Sulawesi*, and great looks at **Moluccan Scrubfowl** during the night on a black sand beach on *Halmahera*); **20 species of raptor**, which included **all 4 endemic accipiters** on *Sulawesi* (**Vinous-breasted, Spot-tailed, Small (Dwarf), and Sulawesi Goshawks**); **all 28 possible species of pigeon**, including **7 beautiful fruit-doves** (**Superb, Black-naped and Red-eared** on *Sulawesi*, and **Blue-capped, Gray-headed and Scarlet-breasted** in the *Moluccas*), and the rare *Sulawesi Ground-Doves*; **13 species of kingfisher**, (including exceptional long views of a juvenile **Scaly-breasted Kingfisher** at *Gunung Mahawu*); **9 species of owl**, which included all of the endemic species on offer (including a very fortunate daytime sighting of the rare **Minahassa Masked-Owl**, the rarest of the endemic owls); **Moluccan Owlet-Nightjar** whilst on *Halmahera*; **all 5 possible species of nightjar** seen, including **Diabolical (Heinrich’s/Satanic), Savanna and Great Eared-Nightjars** all in the daytime, and a good perched view of **Sulawesi Nightjar** in the spotlight; **all 3 possible hornbills**, with great looks at the dramatic **Knobbed Hornbill** on *Sulawesi* (*photo below*) and equally impressive **Blyth’s Hornbill** in the *Moluccas*; **all 15 possible parrot species**, including good perched views of the **Pygmy (Small Sulawesi) Hanging-Parrot** on *Sulawesi*, and an excellent encounter with a male **Moluccan King-Parrot** at a new site on *Halmahera*; **all 12 possible cuckooshrikes**; spectacular displays of the **Wallace’s Standardwing** near our comfortable dive resort in *Halmahera* on the extension; **all 3 endemic thrushes on Sulawesi** were seen well, including an exceptional encounter of several hours with **Geomalia** at in the mountains of *Central Sulawesi*, as well as the more expected stellar views of **Rusty-backed (Red-backed) Thrush** at *Tangkoko* thanks to the excellent local guides there; **all 9 species of mynas/starlings**, including the striking **Fiery-browed Myna** in the *Sulawesi highlands*, and a **single flock of 16 Sulawesi (Crested) Mynas** on the *Minahassa Peninsula*; and **all 4 endemic flowerpeckers**, which included the scarce **Halmahera Flowerpecker** in the *Moluccas*. Along with this heady list of birds was a discrete set of **interesting, endemic, mammals**, like the habituated troop of **Celebes (Black) Crested Macaques**, daytime roosting **Spectral Tarsiers**, and **Sulawesi Bear Cuscus** all at the wonderful *Tangkoko reserve in Northern Sulawesi*. The top five birds of the tour are mentioned at the end of the report....



## Tour Summary:

**15<sup>th</sup> August**

### **Karaenta Forest & Makassar Fishponds**

Makassar, Sulawesi's capital and largest city, deep in the south of this tentacled island was the launching point for our first day, when we started as we meant to carry on, by heading out birding well before first light! Our destination was the scenic forested limestone hills north of there at **Karaenta**, which offered us our only shot at the endemic Black-ringed White-eye, an island endemic confined to the south of Sulawesi. While we breakfasted in the field, the white-eye, and forest in general appeared quiet and relatively birdless, until the unremarkable **Sulawesi Babbler** became our first endemic of the tour. It was, however, quickly followed by the star bird of the morning, a fine pair of bold **Black-ringed White-eyes**, which responded well. Not long after, we scoured the road for other birds and were rewarded by time at a lookout with a vociferous **Piping Crow** passing conspicuously overhead, a species, which, like the white-eye, never featured away from this site on the tour. Other highlights of our humid morning were an endemic mammal in the form of **Moor Macaque**; our first **Sulawesi Dwarf-Hornbills**, and a **Barred (Sulawesi) Honey-Buzzard** on the wing. While endemics were the focus, of course, the pair of **Barred Buttonquail** that hurried towards us in full glorious view was also very popular too. After a long lunch back at our Makassar hotel, some could not resist the temptation of eastern shorebirds, and so headed out to **Makassar Fishponds**. Unfortunately, a long period of unusually dry weather had left some of these without water, but there was still enough moisture around for **Curlew Sandpipers**, **Long-toed and Rufous-necked Stints**, and, near the end a fine pair of **Javan Plovers**, our main target for the site. As darkness fell many **Savanna Nightjars** emerged and were seen hawking over the marsh and nearby buildings before we returned to our hotel in readiness for a flight into Central Sulawesi next day.



**16<sup>th</sup> August****Makassar to Lore Lindu**

In the morning we flew out of South Sulawesi into the central city of **Palu**, arriving in the late morning, where we took lunch in a good local fish restaurant, and headed up towards **Lore Lindu**, our first major site of the tour, where four nights were to be spent. En-route, the roadside provided **Pale-headed Munias**, **Blue-tailed Bee-eaters**, and even a **White-shouldered Triller**. A stomp around a hot riverside brought daytime views of **Savanna Nightjars** and a **Little (Gould's) Bronze-Cuckoo**, (*photo page 6*), and more *bee-eaters* and *trillers*.

With the heat quickly encouraging us back into the cars, and their enticing air-con, we convoyed up to the edge of **Lore Lindu**, where we stopped in at what was indicated as a *Small (Dwarf) Sparrowhawk* nest, although after hearing the bird call, seeing the well-feathered juvenile well within the nest, and an adult close by, it proved to be the rarer **Vinous-breasted Sparrowhawk**! We also managed to find a **Black-billed Koel** and **Large (Sulawesi) Hanging-Parrot** at another roadside stop. That night, after checking into our simple guesthouse (the best available), and noting the plentiful and good food as compensation for our simple surroundings, we headed out to find our first endemic nightbird, a **Speckled (Boobook) Hawk-Owl**, a short drive from our lodging (....Next morning, another early dawn beckoned, along with a rush of endemics, among the varied locations within Lore Lindu National Park...

**17<sup>th</sup> September****Lore Lindu (Danau Tambing, Wuasa & Sedoa)**

While there has been much, rightly, written, about the tragic lack of protection for some of Indonesia's national parks, which applies to **Lore Lindu**, which has long ago lost any accessible lowland forest, mid and high elevation sites still remain. These varied elevations means that Lore Lindu offers a very long list for the endemic hunters at the start of the tour! A flurry of birds greeted us as we stopped in at **Danau Tambing** during this first morning in the park, although before that occurred we made a short pre-dawn stop for **Cinnabar Boobook**, a recently described species not found in the field guide, which was then discovered in this park as recently as 2007. Thankfully, the bird is generally relatively routine to find, with the help of our sharp local guide, *Idris*, who helped us in finding one within a short time of our arrival. It was only day 3, and we had 2 endemic owls and a nightjar in the bag already! Near the lake the trees were alive with early morning activity, and rush of new birds for all: **Superb Fruit-Doves** fed in a fruiting tree, which was also being frequented by noisy, chattering **Finch-billed Mynas (Grosbeak Starling)**. Nearer the lake still **Yellow-and-green Lorikeets** flew in and perched up in our 'scope regularly, and we soon bagged our second myna of the morning with the dashing **Fiery-browed Myna**, a delightfully common bird of the highlands. The lake itself was rather crowded with Indonesians who were celebrating independence day, though we did still find a pair of **Sunda Teals** resting on the lake, and a party of **Cerulean Cuckooshrikes** foraging along the edge of the trees there. Some snatched a look at a **Sulawesi Myzomela**, others glimpsed a **Purple-bearded Bee-eater**, although both of these colorful birds barely satisfied, merely leaving us yearning for better. A *Sulawesi Hawk-Eagle* nest held a bird in it, which we knew from its loud and regular cries, although the bird itself remained hidden. A more co-operative raptor was a **Sulawesi Serpent-Eagle** that glided in and landed by the roadside. The our experienced local guide out us all on to a mystery bird, clearly a juvenile, up in the canopy, which later was visited by the adult and revealed itself to be a **Hylocitrea**, 2 juveniles of which were eventually seen at length! Being an endemic, and monotypic (i.e. one species) bird family, this is always a top priority, so we were lucky to have it so early on.

In the afternoon, following another good, and large, meal back at the *Sendy Guesthouse*, we continued our pursuit of the lower elevation species of the area, by taking in the **Sedoa Valley**, **Wuasa** and their surrounds. The garden of our simple



lodging provided a party of **Lemon-bellied White-eyes**, and our first **Yellow-sided Flowerpecker**; while the valley eventually showed up **Red-eared Fruit-Dove**, a gorgeous orange-and-blue male **Sulawesi Blue-Flycatcher**, a statuesque **Sulawesi (Pygmy) Woodpecker**, which remained rooted to a tree for some fifteen minutes or more, a pair of **Sulawesi Leaf-Warblers** that were so inactive they allowed for long 'scope looks; and a pair of **Sulawesi Cicadabirds**, which eventually gave the bug-like call of its name. Following a failed attempt to find a local *Sulawesi Masked-Owl* on a nearby church roof during the morning, we tried another spot in the evening, but came back empty-handed save for a flyover **Great Eared-Nightjar** for some.



**18<sup>th</sup> August**

**Lore Lindu (The Anaso Track)**

This was to be a landmark day on the tour, in several ways; it was the first day where people felt the intensity of the pace of the trip, with a very early start needed in order that we make it up the **Anaso Track** in good time for some time sensitive higher elevation species; a long day birding on the track itself, in addition to the rigors involved in doing this. The days walk exceeded 10-km round trip – (there were markedly varied details on this, from different fitness recorders on the tour!) – and was steep, leading some to sit it out altogether, and some to turn back after getting some of the specialties lower down on the track. For those that came, both for some of the day, or all of it, it was a landmark day for avian reasons too, with some remarkable birds seen. As most of the birds on the target list were to be most likely found in the more stunted forest at the upper reaches of the track, we headed up the track in darkness, pre-dawn, so we could make good headway. Just before dawn a **Satanic (Diabolical/Heinrich's) Nightjar** (*photo above*), appeared suddenly on the track, a short way ahead, and got some an early lead on this species. Panic was not necessary for the others though, as no less than FIVE different roosting birds were seen at close range by the days end! It is easy to forget, with the high expectation now of seeing this



species (and during the daytime too), that not that long ago, it was mythical and virtually unknown in life, at the time that the field guide was written. A short time after the pre-dawn individual of the nightjar, with dawn having arrived, a few at the front of the pack, managed to see the elusive **Great Shortwing**, as it hopped on and off the track in the half-light. Similarly, only the front end of the group got to see one of 3 different **Sulawesi Ground-Doves** that morning; two were low flyovers, while the final sighting involved a bird that slowly walked off the trail, giving some great looks at a rarely seen bird. Next up came some small groups of **Golden-mantled Racket-tails** passing overhead, some low enough to see the fine feathers attaching the rackets to the end of this noisy parrot's tail. Our most wanted bird along the track though was to be looked for on the ground; a taxonomic oddity, *Geomalia*, for which the call is still not known. Current thinking is, in spite of its very different appearance, it may well be an odd *zoothera* thrush, although in years past, birder's speculated that it might represent a monotypic family all of its own. Considerable luck is required to see this species on any given day, as it needs to feed on the track itself to be seen, something it does not do each day. Further to that, some individuals, on some days, quickly move away from the track, (and into dense forest), before the entire group can get on to it. Lastly, the call of the bird remains curiously unknown, making just chancing upon one foraging, the only method to be used to see it! With odds low like this we continued up the track all the same, with our experienced "Geomalia-tracker", Idris at the head of the group, and all remaining quiet and focused to the task. Amazingly, just a short time after we started walking at the correct altitude for the bird, the guide spotted one slinking away into the forest, which avoided all but Idris. He tried to herd it back to the trail, but a fleeting glimpse of the bird as it shot across the trail was all that was achieved, leaving us all rather deflated.







We carried on up, adding other high elevation species like **White-eared Myza**, but **Maroon-backed Whistler** proved extraordinarily elusive on this tour, even for that master-skulker; Ian, who'd chosen to head down, post nightjar, managed to see one with Theo, and that would remain the only sighting of the tour. As we climbed higher, suddenly Idris stopped in his tracks and declared there was a GEOMALIA on the track. We peered around the corner, only to see a **Sulawesi Thrush** sitting there; nice, but not a *Geomalia*. Confusion reined for a little while, as Idris insisted he had seen a *Geomalia*, while David and Sam at least had seen a very clear *Sulawesi Thrush* in what appeared to be the same position on the trail. We slowly moved a little further, and then Idris proudly declared the bird was there, and finally, all got to see a wonderful **Geomalia** as it foraged along the track (*photos this page & page 9*), hopped on to a log, and revealed itself easily to all present. It turned out to be a landmark day for this species, for by this stage coupled with the earlier sighting, we could boast 2 individuals in a day, something that not many can say at all. However, on the way back down the trail, in the late morning, we were able to follow what revealed itself to be an entirely different individual (from photos of the tail), for well over an hour, and even pop back up and see it during lunch in the sweltering heat of the day, by which time, historical record of the bird suggests it should have been long gone! Our local guide had been birding the area for years, and had never had either 3 different *Geomalias* in a single morning, or an individual perform for as long, or as late in the day as the final bird did; we literally got to walk within 25-feet of it, as we needed to pass by to reach our lunch. The bird happily let us



do that, by hopping to the side of the trail, only to return moments later, once us bothersome humans, had passed by! Our morning was largely quiet other than this, with some typically high-flying “black bullets”, or **Mountain Serins** noted too. The upper sections of the Anaso Track can be painfully quiet, with little dwelling there, and we got to see this as we made our way slowly down, following a hot lunch of noodles, chicken, and rice in the field, generously walked up to us by the local staff. Heading down, we did find some of the regular mountain specialties, which we had already seen, like **Sulphur-vented (-bellied) Whistler**, **Rusty-bellied Fantail**, and the unremarkable **Sulawesi Leaf-Warbler**. We did also add **Chestnut-backed Bush-Warbler** to the list, with some getting good brief views of this notoriously difficult to observe bird. Other birds that were noted that day included **Red-eared Fruit-Dove**, **Island (Verditer) Flycatcher**, **Snowy-browed and Blue-fronted Flycatchers**, and **Streak-headed Dark-eye (white-eye)**. It took us the entire afternoon to get back down, arriving back, tired but happy, for our waiting cars in the late afternoon. There was one major highlight of the journey back though, when we chanced on a stunning **Purple-bearded Bee-eater**, (*photo below*), which toyed with us for a bit, before sitting for a gloriously long time in the telescope, for us all to soak up at length.



19<sup>th</sup> August

## Lore Lindu (The Anaso Track OR Lake Taming &amp; Sedoa)

For our last full day in **Lore Lindu**, we found ourselves with a small list of birds to chase dotted about both at the higher elevations and also some available lower down. Thus, with some exhausted from the first day, we split the group between the guides, Sam heading up the track again with some, while Theo took out the larger group around the lower areas, where the birding would be less physically demanding. The track was noticeably quieter than the previous day, and we hoped for *Geomalia*, for the person who'd opted out the day before failed to appear, but our highest reward came in the form of an excellent close look at one of a pair of **Sombre Pigeons**, our first **Rusty-breasted Cuckoo**, and yet more **Satanic (Diabolical/Heinrich's) Nightjars**, and **White-eared Myzas**, (*photo below*).

Raptors were the undoubted highlight for the group lower down, getting **Rufous-bellied Eagle**, **Sulawesi Serpent-Eagle**, and **Sulawesi Hawk-Eagle**, as well as **Black Eagle**, from a strategic lookout that Theo staked out for a short time in the late morning. They also watched the odd **Malia**, within a mixed feeding flock, and picked up some distant **Knobbed Hornbills** and **Ivory-breasted**



**Woodswallows** too, as well as more regular birds like **Yellow-and-green Lorikeet**, **Finch-billed** and **Fiery-browed Mynas**, **Cerulean Cuckooshrike** (better looks), and **Sulawesi Pygmy-Woodpecker**. For the folks who spent a long day on the track, they got down and visited the nest again of the **Sulawesi Hawk-Eagle**, which was again heard calling in the area from a hidden position. However, then Sonia announced she had it, and the bird had flown in and landed in full view within the nesting tree. The same area held some other regulars, like **Yellow-and-green Lorikeets**, which were nesting in the base of the eagle's nest. A longer search for the continually elusive *Sulawesi Masked-Owl* in another local spot, once again turned up nothing.



20<sup>th</sup> August

Lore Lindu (Lake Taming &amp; Sedoa) to Palu



First light saw us try, again, for the famously elusive *Scaly-breasted Kingfisher*, which did not even call once during our dawn-time vigil. That was followed by what can only be described as a “good” showing from a **Great Shortwing**, which circled us, and showed to some for a short time (typical for this species). We spent much of our final morning at **Lore Lindu** desperately trying to locate the recently described *Sulawesi Streaked-Flycatcher*, at an area near the lake where it was nesting just a few weeks earlier. A flycatcher of this type was seen, all be it briefly, high in the trees, but was not there long enough to rule out *Gray-streaked Flycatcher*, and did not return. This provided us with plenty to look at, much of which was not new to us, or were catch up birds that some had missed previously, such as a scarlet-headed male **Sulawesi Myzomela** watched preening with the ‘scope fully trained on it, or better looks at species, which had not showed at their best before then, like the beady-eyed **Cerulean Cuckooshrike**, or **Pygmy Cuckooshrike** that also turned up around **Taming**. We also had good looks at some low feeding **Red-eared Fruit-Doves**, which were to be the last encounter with that species of the tour, and hit another good spell for raptors, with **Black Eagle** gliding over the lake, where a **Sulawesi Serpent-Eagle** also was seen perched up too, while a near hillside offered up **Rufous-bellied Eagle** during the late morning. We also saw 2 of the 4 endemic *accipiters* during the morning around the **Lake Taming** area; **Spot-tailed Goshawk** was a major target bird we were still lacking, and so early on we focused on finding that one, and were quickly

greeted with a response from a bird buried deep in the forest. On this occasion the bird continued its vocal response to us, but refused to come to within visible range, so Idris crept into the forest then called us in once he had this immature bird in his sights, where it remained long enough for us all to see it filling the 'scope. The other hawk we saw was another adult **Small (Dwarf) Sparrowhawk**, (*photo page 13*), which was our third sighting of the trip, a very good return for this species! Stuart and a few others also got a headstart on **Yellow-billed Malkoha**, one car seeing them just after the other two cars had departed! Our final morning closed with a feisty **Golden-headed Cisticola**, which came in close to check us out. We also got a surprise **Rufous-winged Buzzard** both perched and flying bringing our raptor tally for the day to 7 species.

We enjoyed one final large spread back at our familiar guesthouse, before we checked out and headed back to Palu for the night, in readiness for a flight out the following morning. We found we had enough time to re-visit the same riverside close to the city in the afternoon, as were missing one scarce species from there. As we resumed our search for a second buttonquail of the tour, we soon out up a handful of roosting **Savanna Nightjars** in the area, picked up another **Little (Gould's) Bronze-Cuckoo**, and noted some more **White-shouldered Trillers**. However, before long, Sam and Joyce glimpsed our quarry, **Red-backed Buttonquail**. After a further walk around we finally stumbled upon one that was happy to be seen by all, which signaled us to leave, and head to a good hotel in **Palu**, where hot showers and Internet were a delight after days without them!





**21<sup>st</sup> August****Palu to Tangkoko**

This was largely a travel day, with the long journey out of *Central Sulawesi*, and into *North Sulawesi*, only possible by first taking a flight south to South Sulawesi (and back to **Makassar**), before connecting with a flight north into **Manado**. Once we reached Manado, we picked up a new set of drivers, and were quickly on our way east to the eastern tip of the **Minahassa Peninsula**, and the wonderful **Tangkoko** reserve. We managed to find time for some late birding at a lookout that afternoon, although high winds restricted bird activity somewhat, but we did see our first **Silver-tipped Imperial-Pigeons** and an **Oriental Hobby**. Our first attempt at tracking down the oft-tricky *Sulawesi Nightjar* resulted in a brief call, but no sight or sound of it thereafter, and so we checked into our villas, which were to become home for the next 3 nights while we explored this excellent birding and mammal area. After more copious amounts of food (a regular feature of the tour), some could not resist the two-minute walk from our villas to try and find one of the local **Sulawesi Scops-Owls**, (*photo page 14*), which Theo had alerted us to. It was not bother at all, and before long we staring right up at a very confiding owl looking down on us! During the night some also heard the haunting screeches of the rare *Minahassa Masked-Owl* that passed over the property, and an *Ochre-bellied (Boobook) Hawk-Owl* displaying that even with the successful nightbirding we'd had thus far, there was still plenty more on the agenda just yet.



**22<sup>nd</sup> August****Tangkoko**

For our time in **Tangkoko** we were to be joined by one of Sulawesi's very best birders, Samuel, who has been showing people the area's best birds for the past decade or more, and his vaunted reputation is well-deserved indeed. He joined us as we'd just seen our first **Ruddy Kingfisher** of the trip, just after breakfast within the grounds of our simple lodging. Samuel wasted little time in showing us other birds, with a pair of **Ivory-backed Woodswallows** and a **White-necked Myna** also perched within the grounds of our lodge. Having got only very distant views of the former, for some, at Lore Lindu, we were happy to get killer looks for all on this occasion, which kick-started one of the best birding days of the tour. Tangkoko is a coastal lowland reserve, which offered excellent forest birding, as well as mangrove birding too during our stay, and is especially known for its extraordinary diversity of kingfishers, with no less than *10 species* listed for the site!





However, kingfishers would have to wait until later in the day; on the drive in two of the three cars we were using got good looks at a **Stephan's Dove** foraging on the ground, while another got a look at **Tabon Scrubfowl**. Soon after entering the forest we all managed good looks at the latter too. Once we had parked up we began a morning on foot in various areas of the forest. We started within an open area, where up to 4 different **Purple-winged Rollers** (*photo page 15*), posed in the early morning sun. Not long later we stumbled upon our first troop of **Celebes (Black) Crested Macaques** (*photo page 30*), which were being followed along by a flock containing the handsome **Yellow-billed Malkoha**. A *Sulawesi Triller* there was less helpful, doing a disappearing act before all but Sam and Samuel had set eyes on it. Hopping back into the vehicles to begin a more extensive walk through the forest, we soon had to jump out for some roadside **Bay Coucals**, which had betrayed their presence with their low hooting sounds.



Heading out on foot for the rest of the morning, we were soon being shown one of Tangkoko's most famous avian residents, the stunning **Rusty-backed (Red-backed) Thrush**, (*photo above*), feeding unconcernedly nearby. By the morning's end we had seen at least of them in different spots! During the morning Samuel walked us through the open forest, with limestone underfoot, from one of his stakeouts to another, while the group chipped in by finding several notable finds of their own. After Samuel had led us to the first of half a dozen **Green-backed Kingfisher** for the morning (*photo page 16*), Joyce commented that she had "another kingfisher", which Sam took to mean, another *Green-backed*. However, when he joined her he was pleased as punch to find it was the **Lilac-cheeked Kingfisher** (*photo page 22*), on what turned out to be an excellent day for the species, with 6 of these seen by the day's end too! After much time spent admiring these two very co-operative kingfishers, we were walked to another easy stake out, where a pair of **Great Eared-Nightjars** was sleeping just above the forest floor, in full glorious view of us all. The new birds were streaming in thick and fast, and all of them were

giving us stellar looks, including a pair of **Ashy Woodpeckers**, (*photo below*), and after straining for a while we all got cracking views of our first male **Black-naped Fruit-Dove**. Then, a remarkable chain of events took place; Samuel got a call and relayed a message that one of the other local guides in the area had found a roosting *Sulawesi Masked-Owl*! This was an extraordinary stroke of luck, and very unexpected, and we were told we should hurry there, in case it took off, which is what we did. This was welcome news, following our four failed attempts to find this species at various stakeouts in Lore Lindu. As we walked, one of the group, David, remarked on something that had been swimming around in Sam's mind: "Are they sure it is not a *Minahassa Masked-Owl* (and not a *Sulawesi Masked-Owl*)?!" Samuel admitted that the local guide in



question may not be able to recognize one from the other, and so intrigue accompanied our walk, although we all knew that the rareness of the *Minahassa* made it seem more likely that it was indeed a *Sulawesi Masked-Owl*. The beauty of it for us was that either was good news! After some frantic walking through the humid forest we arrived to find the guide pointing at the bird, and as we all clapped eyes on it for the first time, Samuel excitedly proclaimed

"*Minahassa, Minahassa!!!*" An absolutely stunning **Minahassa Masked Owl** (*photo title page*), was sat there glaring at us, from a low perch. As we ogled it at length through the Swarovski telescope, it changed position a few times but stayed around, actually perching in a more open spot for us to admire, before we walked away from it in stunned disbelief. We could not believe our luck, and decided to try and capitalize on our run, by continuing on, in search of Ochre-bellied (Boobook) Hawk-Owl, at a regular roost area. Not long after one owl, we were blinking up at another, as an **Ochre-bellied (Boobook) Hawk-Owl** barely registered our presence, as it slumbered in a palm tree (another pair was found later that day during the afternoon too!) Although, a *Sulawesi Dwarf-Kingfisher* that was searched for in both the late morning, and afternoon, brought us crashing back down to Earth, after this rare run of form, by failing to be either seen nor heard. After lunch back at our base, the afternoon was an anti-climax, with little significant seen at all, bar some repeats of some of the best morning birds; and, once again, the **Sulawesi Nightjar** proved elusive with all but Sam and Sonia not getting looks (and their looks were poor at best).



23<sup>rd</sup> August

Tangkoko

Our second full day at **Tangkoko** was a little less dramatic as the first, although we still got some new birds, and some key ones at that. Normally when we visit this site, we go for an afternoon boat ride into the mangroves on the first afternoon, although the tide dictated that we should do this mid-morning instead. The reason for visiting the mangrove area of Tankoko, is to try and add another kingfisher, the powerfully-built *Great-billed (Black-billed) Kingfisher*, as well as the scarce endemic *White-rumped Cuckooshrike*. As we could not get into the channel of mangroves until later, we set off with Samuel directly into the forest right at the crack of dawn, with another more diminutive kingfisher in mind. Returning to the same areas that Samuel had scoured the day before, this time he hit the jackpot and showed us a smashing **Sulawesi Dwarf-Kingfisher**, glowing in the forest understory. On the way back to catch the boat we were foiled in our attempts to find a calling *White-faced Cuckoo-Dove (Sulawesi Black Pigeon)*, but did better with **Yellow-breasted Racket-tail**, getting prolonged scope looks. By the time we reached the mangrove channel, and boarded 3 outrigger boats to enter the waterway, the sun was well up and we were going to be boiled while out there; not ideal, but something we could not control, with the tide as it was. Therefore, it was relief to find a pair of vocal **White-rumped Cuckooshrikes** a short way into the ride, which were seen again at the end of it too. In between we got several sightings of the **Great-billed (Black-billed) Kingfisher**, which, after a little stress, and time, was seen by all of our three boats. Tangkoko is not all about kingfishers, but they are certainly prominent there among the avian highlights, and this boat trip displayed this well, with a dozing **Ruddy Kingfisher** posing in front of all too (*photo below*)...



The afternoon was, as predicted, quieter, with our attempts to track down gaps in our list like *Pied Cuckooshrike* failing. However, we did get a pair of perched Ornate Lorikeets, and then a great look at an **Isabelline Bush-Hen** shortly before darkness fell. We planned to stay on for dusk for a third try at **Sulawesi Nightjar**, which was fast becoming a nemesis bird for the tour. Once again, a skittish bird flitted by at dusk and was seen by only one person, frustrating us all again. So we moved on to another spot, by which time Sam was already planning a final attempt the following dawn, when, finally, we heard one calling continually, something that had yet to happen. We hurried along the trail, and found a small opening, where a Sulawesi Nightjar was lit up in the spotlight as it called from its perch for short time.

## 24<sup>th</sup> August

## Tangkoko to Kotamobagu

This was another long travel day, largely, as we needed to head deep into the west of the *Minahassa Peninsula* to the town of Kotamobagu, the launching base for our forays into *Dumoga-Bone National Park* in the coming days now actually renamed *Bogani Nani Wartabone*). This is a long drive, which took up much of the day, so we spent a precious few hours at a scenic lookout over the forest in **Tangkoko** before we departed. We had some specific holes to



plug in our list, and set about doing this, in spite of yet more windy weather, which characterized our time in Tangkoko. In spite of this we had some great birds; flock of **Ivory-backed Woodswallows** (*photo above*), gave us the best views of the tour, and a **White-faced Cuckoo-Dove** (**Sulawesi Black Pigeon**) did what we hoped, and landed in a near tree, so that we could all see it well. As the morning wore on, we picked up various pigeons and parrots, something for which the site is especially good for: the common **Green Imperial-Pigeons** being seen alongside **Silver-tipped Imperial-Pigeons**, a super **White-bellied Imperial-Pigeon**, and a single **Gray-cheeked (Green) Pigeon** too. On the parrot front, we got our only perched views of **Golden-mantled Racket-tail**, and had some great looks at both **Large (Sulawesi) Hanging-Parrot**, and the diminutive red-billed **Pygmy Hanging-Parrot**. A **Sulawesi (White-rumped) Triller** in the same area was new too, and showed us both front and back, so that we could see the white rump. However, in spite of the new birds up there, many will remember it for crisp looks at two species we had seen before, although we had just perfect views at both a male **Black-naped** and **Superb Fruit-Doves** sharing the same fruiting tree for a while, (*photo next page*). Both birds ended up being voted for in the top trip birds at the trip end, and it is certain that was due to the amazing looks on this particular day.





The long ride to **Kotamobagu** was broken up with some short stops in rice paddies, some of which were brimming with birds; additions included **Black-faced Munia** in a flock with **Chestnut and Scaly-breasted Munias**, along with a small group of **Java Sparrows**; and a lone **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper**. We also got great looks at a trio of **Buff-banded Rails** in one particular paddy (*photo below*), along with the usual **Javan Pond-Herons** in various stages of molt from breeding to non-breeding plumage. Also along the way we picked up **Zebra Dove**, and made a stop for the only **Pink-necked Pigeons** of the tour.





25<sup>th</sup> August**Dumoga-Bone (Tambun & Toraut)**

Once again we saw the dawn rise, having left our city hotel in the dark, on the trail of one of Sulawesi's signature birds. We started by visiting the **Tambun** area of **Dumoga-Bone**, the famed breeding area of the Maleo, a helmeted, pink-breasted megapode that is endemic to Sulawesi. Traditionally, the method to try and see this bird was to arrive pre-dawn, or late in the afternoon, in order to try and track them down in their roost trees, when they are generally easier to observe than when on the ground. However, newly erected blinds on site now allow views over the breeding area without disturbing the birds. We got to witness this firsthand. Just moments after our arrival, our local guide, and park ranger spotted a pair of adult **Maleos** digging in the hard volcanic soils, in order to lay their egg. The birds showed no signs of concerns at our presence; while one bird continued to dig inside the ground (they can lay as deep as 2 meters/6 feet), while one of the pair stood at the surface keeping watch. We observed them through the 'scope for a time, before the birds completing their laying, and wandered back into the surrounding forest. This was a great sighting all of its own, although later we got to be involved in the release of 3 chicks (*photo below*), which the park had reared from eggs for their protection, releasing them once they have hatched; (this is done to ensure the eggs are not predated on by either monitors or illegal human harvesters). With the Maleos extraordinarily easy, and seen with little fuss, we wandered into the hillside forest ourselves, in pursuit of a calling **Maroon-chinned (Obelhoser's) Fruit-Dove**. After some brief flight views we lost track of them so continued along the trail, hoping to find another pair of these local endemics. At the far end of the trail, we heard another calling, and after some neck straining, and much repositioning Max announced he had a pair of them. They remained firmly within sight, with the telescope trained on them for the next 20 minutes or so, when we could even see the small isolated section of maroon on the chin.





Other birds were limited during a hot and humid morning on site, with no *Sulawesi Pittas* heard at all, a bird that had also been strangely absent in our time at Tangkoko. We did get another **Green-backed Kingfisher**, and a flyover **Sulawesi Serpent-Eagle**, (*photo right*). En-route to lunch we stopped and checked several wet paddies, and a wetland that was now sadly overgrown and largely birdless. These stops did yield our only **Intermediate Egret** of the trip standing alongside **Great and Little Egrets** for comparison, along with some **Pied Stilts**, in a waterlogged rice paddy. We also saw a handful of **Black Kites**, some of the only sightings of the entire trip, as well as the more regular **Brahminy Kite** too. We also noted around ten **Barn Swallows**, which were some of the only seen on the tour. For lunch we were treated to a huge spread at a nearby guesthouse, which also allowed us some time to escape the heat of the midday sun. After lunch we headed to another forest



fragment within the national park (national parks in Indonesia are often poorly protected, leaving just limited habitat available). This next area was **Toraut**, where shortly after arrival we were eyeballing their regular **Speckled (Boobook) Hawk-Owl**, roosting in the eaves of an old, disused park building, a traditional roost site that has been present for some years. There were actually two individuals present, the other sitting more discretely in the forest nearby, but keeping a watchful eye on us all the same. We then undertook one of the more adventurous parts of the tour, taking a short raft ride across a narrow river, in order to reach the forest at **Toraut**. The raft was made of bamboo, and the ride was all of 5 minutes to cross the creek. Our raft boarding was, however, delayed, when Sam picked up a squadron of some 25 or so **Purple Needleetails** circling overhead, the only ones of the tour. This part of the park is particularly good for *Pied Cuckooshrike*, arguably the scarcest of the dozen species from this family available on this tour (and the extension). However, first up we went in pursuit of *Sulawesi Dwarf-Kingfisher*, for those who had not been present for the earlier sighting in Tangkoko, as this made sense with regard to its location near the dock. However, after hearing one calling, but not managing to locate it, we were distracted by the sound of a *Pied Cuckooshrike* calling conspicuously overhead, and so went off in pursuit of this instead. This took some time, and indeed, in the midst of this were led straight to a smashing **Sulawesi Dwarf-Kingfisher** by one of the local guides (*photo page 24*); a bird that co-operated superbly, remaining sat in the open at eye level for five solid minutes, the type of view that no doubt contributed to its inclusion within the top five birds of the trip. With the kingfisher in the bag, we then set about seeing the **Pied Cuckooshrike**, which had called intermittently nearby, and after some dashing this way and that, we all managed scope views of one of a pair perched in the canopy. Once again, though, our overtures to find a *Sulawesi Pitta* came up blank with nothing seen or heard.



In the late afternoon we emerged into a large clearing, where the first to emerge got a look at a perched **Yellow-breasted Racket-tail**, as well as a **Purple-winged Roller**; a pair of **Gray-cheeked (Green) Pigeons** were also seen there too. After a long day in the field, in the taxing humidity, many opted to head straight back once back onshore from the raft ride back to the headquarters. Sonia and Joyce decided, however, to try for better looks at **Sulawesi Masked-Owl**, following the short flight views obtained in *Tangkoko*. We waited around for dusk, getting a **Great Eared-Nightjar** glide low overhead as darkness descended, and then getting looks at the *Masked-Owl* as it flew over high, then perched in a distant tree, while several *Sulawesi Scops-Owls* called nearby. However, it did not remain for long, and was soon gone.





**26<sup>th</sup> August****Dumoga-Bone (Molibagu Road) & Kotamobagu**

Another very early start (regular throughout this tour) of 4am saw us driving out to another sector of the national park. This one was very different from the previous two, in that we birded a winding mountain road, weaving its way through some excellent sections of forest. While birding a busy road is not ideal, this particular road often yields good birding, and offers the best access to some species we were still lacking. We spent the entire morning along the **Molibagu Road**, and were rewarded with some great birds, many of which we had seen before, and just a few we had not, which was unsurprising, for at this stage of our tour, there were very few new birds we could find. Our main target for the morning was undoubtedly the *Sulawesi Goshawk*, the final species of the quartet of endemic *accipiters* that we had not seen (*Vinous-breasted*, *Small* and *Spot-tailed Goshawks* all having been seen at Lore Lindu). While the one we were looking for is arguably one of the more abundant species, finding raptors is never easy, and so we knew we still needed some luck all the same. We began in a favored area for the species but came up blank on that front. However, we did get some cracking looks at atypically large numbers of **Sulawesi (Crested) Mynas**, with one flock of 16 being exceptional, and some within the 30 or so birds seen sporting particularly large crests. Along with them were the more expected large numbers of **Finch-billed Mynas**



(**Grosbeak Starlings**), sometimes mixed in together. Most of the morning was about repeats of what we had seen, with numerous of the white-eyed, endemic, *leucops* race of **Hair-crested Drongo** along the road, as well as **White-necked Mynas**, **Large (Sulawesi) Hanging-Parrot**, and a handful of **Black-naped Orioles**. We also got our best looks yet at a **Gray-headed Imperial-Pigeon** perched at close range, got our final views of **Gray-cheeked (Green) Pigeon** and **Sulawesi Dwarf-Hornbill** of the tour, and watched a final group of half a dozen or so **Ivory-backed Woodswallows** gliding above the forested slopes. We also tried again and again for **Sulawesi Pitta**, finally getting a vocal response from a bird, that as glimpsed by some at close

range, which was the best we were to do on the tour, unfortunately, a poor showing for the species, and our undoubted nemesis for the tour! With time wearing on, some people were unsurprisingly desperate for a pit stop, what with the complete lack of facilities in this area; so we found a likely spot and stopped, which proved fortuitous in another way entirely. As people went about their business, a scan of the treetops revealed a raptor standing sentry in the canopy. Running for his 'scope, Sam soon confirmed it was a **Sulawesi Goshawk**, and exactly what they had been looking for. It remained there for all to get looks through the 'scope before it was suddenly gone; everyone was thankful for the need for a stop in hindsight!

We then returned to the same guesthouse for another massive lunch spread, which included a personal favorite, peanut tempeh, a traditional Indonesian food of cake like soybeans and peanuts, which is a lot tastier than it may sound! As we had a particularly early morning looming the next day, with our journey to *Gunung Ambang*, we opted for a slow afternoon, visiting a wetland on the edge of *Kotamobagu*, and getting back to the hotel early after that. On the way to the wetland we spotted our only **Pacific Golden-Plover** of the tour, in roadside paddies holding the usual selection of Wood Sandpipers and **Javan Pond-Herons** otherwise. At the wetland, we were able to view **Dusky and Eurasian (Common) Moorhens**, as well as plentiful **Sacred Kingfishers**, a brief flyby from a **Yellow Bittern** for some, and a **White-breasted Waterhen** that Stuart found. We also got a small group of **Wandering Whistling-Ducks**, which were strangely difficult to find on this tour, as well as a single of the local *hispidoides* race of **Common Kingfisher**. Some excellent views of several **White-browed Crakes** foraging along the edges of the reedbeds were very popular, especially for Sonia, for which this had become something of a nemesis! Another **Buff-banded Rail** also put in appearance there, as did further **Red Collared-Doves**, and a low flying **Black Eagle** (photo page 25).

27<sup>th</sup> August

### Gunung Ambang to Tomohon



With the luxury of two vehicles at our disposal, and some very understanding local help and drivers, we were able to split the group on this morning; those who were prepared to get up in the middle of the night (necessary in order to try for time sensitive birds like *Cinnabar (Boobook) Hawk-Owl* and *Scaly-breasted Kingfisher*, as well as the extremely local *Matinan Flycatcher*), could do so, while those who did not fancy this stayed back and had a relaxing morning in the hotel, joining up with us all for lunch later. Our destination was **Gunung Ambang**, which necessitated a one and half hour drive, and then a one hour walk to reach the area for the *boobook* and the *kingfisher*, both of which are time sensitive, (the *boobook* as by the time of our arrival little was left of the night, before dawn took over; for the *kingfisher* dawn being best as they are almost always silent except for at dawn, making them very difficult to find after this time). While we had all seen **Cinnabar (Boobook) Hawk-Owl** while at *Lore Lindu*, there are some, due to visible plumage differences between the birds at *Lore Lindu* and *Ambang*, who advocate them being considered separate species. Thus, in light of this, we wanted to try and “bank” this species, should this happen later! We arrived at the

spot with precious little night left, and dawn minutes away, but all the same our first play of the call was quickly answered, and within a short time we had wonderful low views of the owl (much better than we had had at *Lore Lindu*, when we staring up at it high in the trees). Having tried, unsuccessfully, for the *Scaly-breasted Kingfisher* at *Lore Lindu* on one evening and two separate mornings, we were all very keen to get this bird, though once again we were thwarted; the bird did call, but only once when still near dark, and then was not heard again the entire morning in spite of many attempts. The species had most definitely become a thorn in our side, and one that had been the large motivation for people waking up in the middle of



the night for! With the kingfisher period waning, we knew we needed to climb higher for one of the most localized species of the tour, the understated *Matinan (Blue) Flycatcher*. So we headed up; being thankful the recent prolonged dry weather (drought?) had made this trail less troublesome than it can, and rendering rubber boots atypically unnecessary. As we rounded a corner, the complex, higgledy-piggledy song of the **Matinan (Blue) Flycatcher** reached our ears ([photo page 26](#)), and once everyone was in sight, we played its call back to it. Quietly, and sneakily it moved in overhead, but Julius, our local guide on the mountain was aware of it and soon gestured to us its position, and we enjoyed prolonged views of this melodious songster. By the end of the morning we had heard another 4 and seen another on the way down. While it may not be a looker like many other species in Sulawesi, and therefore gets overlooked among target birds, it is very rare (listed as “endangered” by Birdlife International), and one of the few species (along with *Yellow-breasted Racket-tail*) that is confined to the northern arm of Sulawesi (i.e. the Minahassa Peninsula). Gunung Ambang represents the only readily accessible site, among only 4 known sites for the species. We managed too, some catch-up species, for some who’d been absent for previous showings at Lore Lindu; this worked very well with **Chestnut-backed Bush-Warbler**, which showed extraordinarily well to all ([photo right](#)), giving exceptional views for a species known for doing anything but! Also on the way down we managed to track down the other subspecies of the odd **Malia**, a different form to that found on Lore Lindu, much to Stuart’s delight, who had not been present for the best views at that site. The flocks and trail also yielded some other birds familiar to us from our time in the mountains at *Lore Lindu* near the start of the tour, like **Rusty-flanked (-bellied) Fantail**, **Fiery-browed Myna**, **Sulawesi Leaf-Warbler**, **Mountain White-eye**, **Sulawesi Babbler**, and **Sulphur-bellied (-vented) Whistler**, although another, **Sombre Pigeon**, that many were not present for on our second ascent of the *Anaso Track*, could not be tempted out into the open. We also got good looks at a **Sulawesi Drongo** through the ‘scope, and some also got further views of **Ashy Woodpecker**, to compliment the sighting we had earlier at Tangkoko. By late morning we were back near the base of the mountain, where farm fields dominate the landscape; here we viewed **Collared Kingfisher**, a small flock of **Chestnut Munias**, and the only **Spotted Harrier** of the tour, which passed very closeby as it quartered these agricultural lands. We were then hosted by the local ranger and guide, Julius, for lunch, before we headed east to a mountain resort in **Tomohon** for the night, seeing little en-route except for a few roadside **Barred Rails**.



28<sup>th</sup> August

## Gunung Mahawu to Manado

This was the final day of the main tour, and therefore few new birds were by now possible at our final major site of the tour, **Gunung Mahawu**. However, there were some, like *Crimson-crowned Flowerpecker*, that only some in the group had seen, and some only poorly; and another significant bird that no one had yet seen – *Scaly-breasted Kingfisher* – for which this offered arguably the best chance at the species. Our pre-dawn departure was made again for this super-elusive and awkward kingfisher. What unfolded for the most part of the morning was nothing short of a nightmare! The site, being so close to Manado, attracts a number of bird photographers, also keen on the kingfisher, and our slightly delayed departure meant we were greeted with the news that a bird had been seen in flight by two photographers, shortly before our arrival, a bird that then would not respond in any way. We continued our search, having a frustratingly brief **Rufous-throated Flycatcher**, that in the short time it was in view only Sonia and Sam got to see well enough to count on the list. We did though get some excellent looks at redheaded male **Sulawesi Myzomelas** through the morning, which for some was an entirely new bird, and for others was an upgrade to earlier views at Lore Lindu. As early morning turned into mid, then late morning, we bumped into some other photographers deep inside the forest who had just taped in one of the *Scaly-breasted Kingfishers*, and so we hurried to the spot, got a short, quiet answer, and then were frustrated as the bird went silent. By this time, it felt like this was a bird that was simply not going to be possible on the tour, and we headed back to the mountain road. At this time, with many waning from the intense, and unsuccessful, search for the kingfisher, Theo took one persistent group back for further tries at the original spot, while Sam ascended the mountain with others to try and get some other targets. Our arrival at the top end of the road was greeted with a party of 3 **Isabelline Bush-Hens** parading around in full view, with a **Barred Rail** or two for company, very welcome for Ian and others who had not been present the evening they showed at *Tangkoko*. We then scoured the roadside mistletoe for another avian quarry, and racked up all three of the endemic flowerpeckers on the island in quick succession: **Gray-sided** and **Yellow-sided Flowerpeckers**, and for many the much-wanted **Crimson-crowned Flowerpecker**, which had eluded most in the brief showings at Lore Lindu earlier on the tour. We also got further looks at both **Plain-throated (Brown-throated)** and **Black Sunbirds** during the morning also, along with **Streak-headed (White-eye) Dark-eye** for some, and some very confiding **Citrine Canary-Flycatchers**. Jack also took the time to wander the short distance to the edge of the volcanic crater, a lookout for which the road was built in recent years; well worth the effort, and where he also got another *bush-hen* on the way up! While Sam's group waited for the pair of **Crimson-crowned**

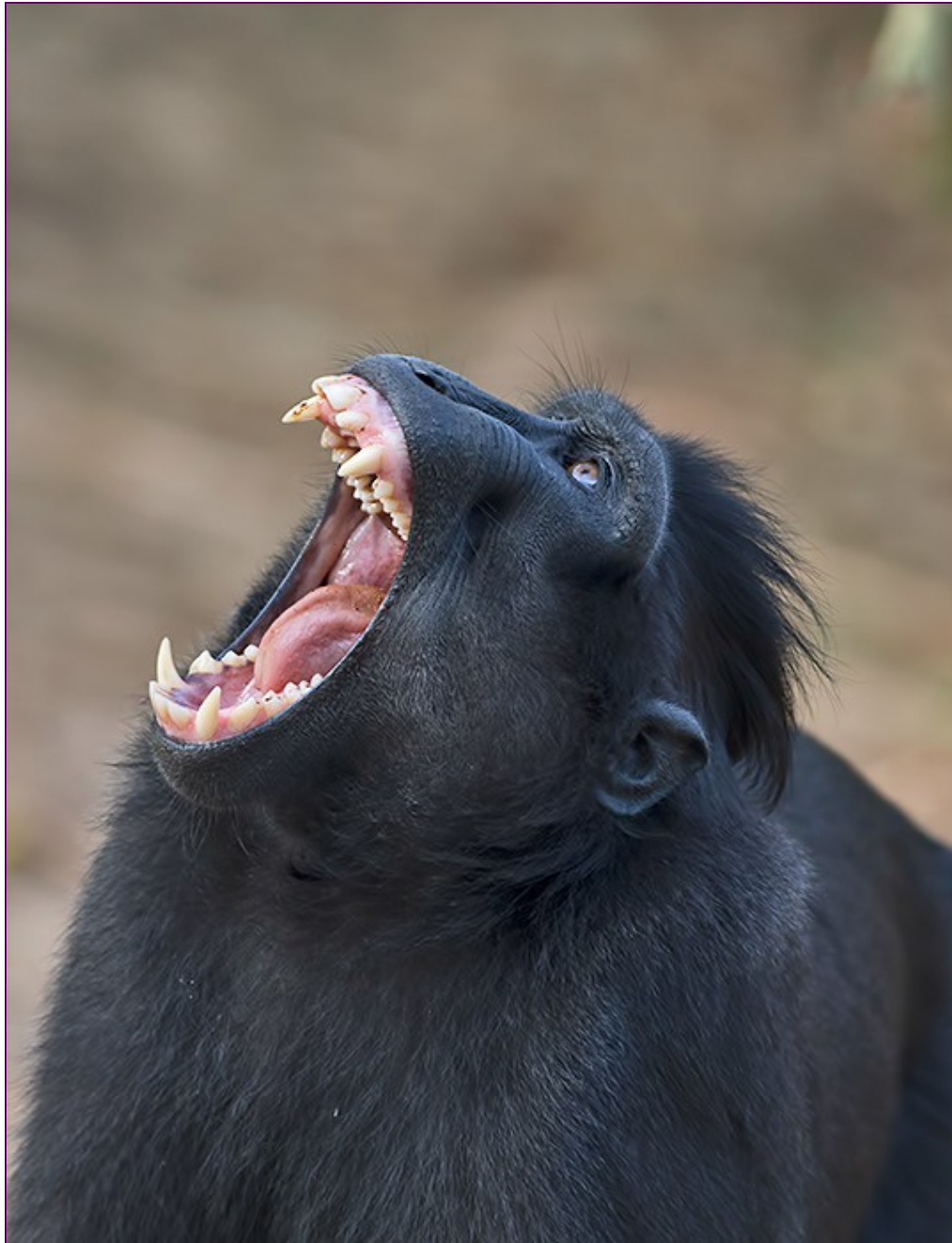




**Flowerpeckers** to return for longer views, the car that had transported the other guys down for the last kingfisher try was seen returning uphill towards us, but with no-one inside, a curious situation! The driver, Calvin, who spoke little English, then said all he needed to say when he stated “Theo, the bird!” This could only mean that Theo and the others had the kingfisher, but how could it possibly stick around for us all to get there! In spite of such cynical thoughts, we all were keen to try, and could not wait for our bus to get down to us, and so all crammed ourselves into Calvin’s small vehicle (5 into 4 spaces was entertaining for the short ride!) As we reached the trailhead, Theo indicated where to go, and we soon saw a relaxed Sonia, Dave and Joyce looking up at a bird just out of our view; we needed to climb up a final small hill to get in view of the bird, which was being watched by not only them but another photography group (who had actually alerted Theo and the others to the bird). Finally, after the short, but painful walk in, we all made it up the hill and stared in utter shock at a juvenile **Scaly-breasted Kingfisher**, which sat in full view, no more than 30 feet away the entire time, until we decided to leave it ([photos page 28 & below](#))! It was a remarkable and fantastic end to our time on *Sulawesi*, and much celebrated all round with *Bintang* beer, while we lunched in view of the smoking 1595m-high (5230ft.) Lokon volcano at lunchtime. Ironically, this volcano was to erupt while we were in Halmahera, closing the airport for a day, which we narrowly avoided, in ignorant bliss, while we were cut off from the news on the Moluccas Extension a few days later!



We then traveled back to the wonderful **Grand Luley Resort** on the outskirts of Manado for our final night, our launching pad to head into the Northern Moluccas, and the island of Halmahera, the next day for the start of the Moluccas Extension the next day. In the late afternoon, a few of us went birding on the grounds, which come equipped with a wonderful boardwalk through the mangroves, and has a splendid view out into the *Sulawesi Sea*. We walked through the mangroves picking up a small party of **White-rumped Cuckooshrikes** on the way through. As the tide was high, it appeared poor timing for shorebirds, although we did find some roosting up around the jetty and in the mangroves, with several **Lesser and Greater Sand-Plovers**, a wonderful **Terek Sandpiper**, and a group of **Gray-tailed Tattlers**. A distant **Bulwer's Petrel** was also seen offshore, which was all wrapped up with an amazing burnt orange sunset at the end of it all!





## Moluccas Extension (Halmahera, Indonesia):

29<sup>th</sup> August – 4<sup>th</sup> September 2015



**Moluccan Scrubfowl** can often require a search deep into the night to find;  
*we were grateful to a bird that allowed us to see it after a mere fifteen minutes on the beach!*

### 29<sup>th</sup> August      Manado to Halmahera (Galela)

Having said our goodbyes to David the evening before, the rest of us rose early (again), took a leisurely breakfast on the wonderful surrounds of the **Grand Luley Resort**, and then headed to **Manado** airport to fly out of the island, an to another, very, very different, island altogether; **Halmahera**. Pre-breakfast some keener individuals returned to the mangrove boardwalk and jetty, to see what else could be seen, and once again enjoyed **Greater and Lesser Sand-Plovers**, **Gray-tailed Tattlers**, **Whimbrel**, **Common Sandpiper**, some more **Common Terns**, and **Olive-backed Sunbird**, another *hispidoides* race **Common Kingfisher** and a pair of **Golden-bellied Gerygones (Flyeaters)** in the mangroves. Stuart also found another **Bulwer's Petrel** in a scan of the horizon by 'scope. We did add our first **Pied Imperial-Pigeons** of the trip though, which were to be seen again once on the *Moluccas*.

After breakfast we took a flight out of Manado to the volcanic cone of **Ternate**, an island just offshore from our final destination, the island of Halmahera, currently only accessible, by speedboat, from Ternate. Ternate is famous among students of evolutionary biology as the place where *Alfred Russel Wallace* allegedly wrote his thoughts on the subject in a letter to *Charles Darwin*, while recovering from a bout of Malaria, a letter which is said had a profound effect on Darwin and the development of his theory. We were soon at the dock on Ternate, where a **Great Frigatebird** was seen, and during the short, 40-minute speedboat ride to Halmahera, Sam saw 2 **Bulwer's Petrels**, which were unfortunately not seen by others from the precarious position on the boat roof! As we arrived at Halmahera, we could see a **Crested (Great Crested) Tern** perched just offshore, and made a short detour to find a **Beach Kingfisher**, which perched up high in the mangroves, and was viewed from the boat before we docked at **Sidangoli**, where we took lunch. Lunch took an interminably long time, by which point we needed to speed it more than we wished to our final destination of the day – the town of **Tobelo**, where we had dinner, before most headed out for one of the strangest nights of the tour (Theo did show us an immature **Gurney's Eagle** before we left though)...



Our reason for traveling all the way up to the northeast coast of the northern arm of Halmahera was simple: **Moluccan Scrubfowl (Megapode)**, a strange bird that flies in from a volcanic island offshore to a black sand beach to lay its eggs each night. A one-hour drive from our city hotel brought us to an unremarkable patch of coconut palms, which we walked



through to a hidden dock, where a small outrigger boat was waiting to take us across the channel to the chosen beach of the scrubfowl. For this outing we were joined by Gode, the local guide, and local harvester of the scrubfowl's eggs (they limit what they take each day to ensure the survival of the species). While waiting at the dock we set about seeing one of our first Moluccan specialties, **Moluccan Scops-Owl**, which performed superbly, being seen perched in the surrounding palms and mangroves at close range. Two boat trips were needed to get us all over to the deserted beach, which by now was bathed in moonlight. As we readied for our potentially long *scrubfowl* search, we taped in a **Large-tailed Nightjar** that the first boat had seen while waiting for the rest of us. Then we took a walk with Gode on the beach, and after a couple of short flyby scrubfowl, which escaped us, Gode trained his spotlight on one that was sat on the beach, then took flight and clambered into a near mangrove for prolonged views by all, a mere FIFTEEN MINUTES after we had began! While Sam and Stuart waited to take the final boat back, another, very confiding scrubfowl was tracked down too. We then returned to the hotel in the town of Tobelo, an hour away, and agreed on a relaxed 7:30am start time for breakfast the next day (almost unheard of on this tour), in order to recover from the rigors of the day!

### 30<sup>th</sup> August      Halmahera (Tobelo to Weda)

This was a day featuring another long journey, although birds were seen along the way, making this more than tolerable. Our first stop saw us tucking in, in earnest, to our first Moluccan specialties: **Moluccan Flycatcher (Slaty Monarch)** and **Cream-throated White-eyes** both being found frequenting the same patch of mangrove, along with a pair of male **Shining Flycatchers** and a flock of 9 or so **Rainbow Bee-eaters** that passed low overhead. We also picked up the ubiquitous **Willie-wagtail** while there, a very common species on Halmahera, but completely absent on Sulawesi, like so many species



which differ from one side of *Weber's Line* to the other, an imaginary line which divides the islands of Sulawesi and the Moluccas from each other and separates the markedly different avifaunas of the *Orient* (on the Sulawesi side), and *Australasia/Australo-Papua* on the Moluccan side. The next stop saw us looking at one of the more colorful endemics we were seeking, with a superb **Blue-capped Fruit-Dove** foraging in a roadside tree, which was also bursting with a group of noisy **Metallic Starlings**, a bird that was to become very familiar during our time in the Moluccas. The same area saw us get cracking looks at a **Sacred Kingfisher**, one of the few birds present that were also on the island of Sulawesi earlier on the trip. Even the crows are different here, very different indeed, as a noisy group of **Long-billed Crows** revealed, with their outsized beaks, and broad, eagle-shaped wings. Theo also pointed out our first of many **Rufous-bellied Trillers** in the area too, a handsome endemic *cuckooshrike*, one of 12 cuckooshrike species seen on the tour.



After another longer lunch than we would have liked (things can be a little slower on a “backwater” island like Halmahera, where the pace of life is generally a little slower), we set off for **Weda Resort**, one of the best accommodations of the tour. It took us some time to get there, so that we did not pull in, after bumping along the final section of unpaved road, until well after dark. Our arrival there was delayed to some degree not only by our long lunch, but also a stop that yielded our first **Paradise Crow**, perched in a coconut palm, a group of three lumbering **Goliath Coucals** in another palm, and a handful of **Blue-and-white Kingfishers** adorning the near wires. Ian's pit stop in the area paid off for him and just a few others who got to see the **Common Paradise-Kingfisher** he found. After arriving at our dive resort at dinnertime, we took dinner quickly, connected with one of our excellent local guides, Denny, and some of us then went straight out for **Moluccan Owlet-Nightjar**, which had been seen close to our cabins recently. It did not take long for us to hear the maniacal cries of the owlet-nightjar, before Denny walked into the mangroves and found it perched, thankfully in view of all, through a narrow window from the trail (preventing most from needing to wade into the mud for views!) An endemic nightbird minutes after our arrival at Weda was an early sign of what a special place this was to be for us.





*Female (above) and immature (below) **Blue-and-white Kingfishers** on the wires en-route to Weda*





**Long-billed Crow** and **Sacred Kingfisher**, en-route to Weda





**31<sup>st</sup> August****Halmahera (Weda)**

We were to enjoy 3 full days birding in the Weda area, while staying in the comforts of the excellent dive resort of the same name, which brought us the best food of the trip so far, characterized by locally caught fish from Weda Bay, over which the resort looks. Our first morning involved another pre-dawn breakfast and departure, followed by a 30-minute walk through the rainforest. For the final leg of this walk, as the forest awoke, we could hear the harsh cries or our quarry emanating from the end of the trail. Not long after with the sun rising ever-higher, we got looks at several **Wallace's Standardwings**, (*photo below*), as males came to their traditional display trees, erected their bright metallic-green shield on their chests, and displayed the wispy whitish standards, (afterwhich they were named both in their English and scientific names), which appear to emanate from their wings. It

was quite the show, and something that visiting birders to Halmahera demand to see! We were not disappointed by them, although other birds in the same area, like **Drab Whistler**, and **White-naped and Spectacled Monarchs** were disappointing in only showing to some people high in the trees. Moving on from one major Halmahera target to another, we soon heard the whistles of **Ivory-breasted Pittas** coming from deep within the forest. We spent some time working to try and get one of them to come in, and finally, after considerable neck twisting and re-positioning Bang-bang, our eagle-eyed local guide, found one sat in the canopy, which afforded us



all 'scope looks after some stress trying to get all to the telescope, which was finely balanced on a rocky limestone slope! Although things appeared slowly, with no apparent sudden rush of birds, in hot and humid conditions perhaps limiting bird activity, by the day's end we could claim 2 *pitta* species, 1 *bird-of-paradise*, 6 species of *parrot*, 3 species of *cuckooshrike*, regular flights of *hornbills*, and 9 species of *pigeon*! And among these were many new for us. Also on the way out from the Standardwing display site, we were gifted an extraordinary, long, and close look at a grounded **Nicobar Pigeon**, which Tina especially was afforded incredible looks of. A fruiting tree holding our first of many **Gray-headed Fruit-Doves** saw us make an extraordinary effort to see them, seeing as these were our very first, of what would become a familiar bird during our time on Halmahera. Less bold and attractive was a **Dusky Myzomela** seen deep inside the forest too, arguably one of the duller birds seen on the extension! The mid-late morning was hot and largely birdless, save for a close perched **Cinnamon-bellied Imperial-Pigeon** that, once again, the sharp-eyed Bang-bang chipped in with. The *Sombre Kingfisher* in the same area merely toyed with us and the species would have to wait until later that day to be satisfactorily added to the list. However, en-route back to the resort, a tree with a noisy, playful group of **Red-flanked Lorikeets** brought great looks at both red-throated males and yellow-cheeked females of this pretty parrot. During a lunchtime break taken up by all except Sam and Sonia, another male **Moluccan Flycatcher (Slaty Monarch)**, (*photo page 38*), and a much lower **Gray-headed**

**Fruit-Dove** were seen, (the latter showing its claret belly and lemon yellow vent), along with **Blyth's Hornbills** right above the cabins ([photo page 40](#)).

In the afternoon, after stopping for some stellar looks at roadside **Red-cheeked Parrots** and **Violet-necked Lorries**, we drove along an old logging road to a new trail, which Weda have set up in the area, and where we hoped to track down a *Moluccan Pitta* (a recent split from the Red-bellied Pitta complex, which was split into 16). However, on arriving in the area, we were rightly distracted by a calling pair of *Invisible (Drummer) Rails*, which responded vocally but never emerged to where anyone could see it, an encounter which was to be our only time we ever got close to this rail. Moving deep into the forest, we first tried for an **Ivory-breasted Pitta** that was calling closeby for some who could not make it up the steep bank to the telescope that morning, one of which, Carol, was rewarded with views once the rest of us had walked away thinking the bird was not interested!!! Then we went off in pursuit of a calling **Moluccan Pitta**, which had chosen its hiding place well; in spite of being close, we simply could not get an angle on its calling perch, that was until Bang-bang's sharp eyesight skillfully picked out the bird sitting low in the understory, which allowed Sam to line it up in the 'scope for all! In the late afternoon we came out to the forest edge, with the light being lost inside the deeper forested sections, which gave us considerably easier birding than we had thus far experienced; a pair of **Halmahera Cuckooshrikes** joined the list, while others caught up with a **White-bellied Cuckooshrike** that was in their company too. We also got our proper views of some **White Cockatoos** in the area, which were hard to ignore by virtue of their loud raucous calls; while a male **Eclectus Parrot** was seen well perched in a close tree to the cuckooshrikes, and a **Great-billed Parrot** passed overhead quicker than we'd have liked.





On the way to our next stop we paused the cars to watch a pair of **Dusky Scrubfowl (Megapode)** sitting in a small clearing, where recently the resort had laid out natural food for them, which was clearly already paying dividends. In the late afternoon, one of the regular calling **Sombre Kingfishers** finally put us out of our misery, coming in and perching close for us all to look at, something which could not be said of some **Common Paradise-Kingfishers** we tried for late on (they came in, but only once it was nearly fully dark). Then it was time to get back to nightbirding, with one major endemic nightbird still remaining. By the time we emerged from the failed attempt at paradise-kingfishers, the **Halmahera (Boobooks) Hawk-Owls**, were already calling, and it did not take long to get one of the birds onto a near branch, and into the 'scope (*photo, right, below*). Although, Bang-Bang got us the best looks, at a front-facing second bird of the pair, a short way from the first, which had us heading to dinner in a chipper mood! After dinner, Sam, Sonia, and Ian, returned to a nightbirding schedule, for Ian had been absent for both the night before's *owlet-nightjar*, and the night before that's *Moluccan Scops-Owl*. Thankfully, on this occasion, the nightbirding comprised only a short walk from our cabins. Both birds performed near perfectly, with a **Moluccan Scops-Owl** coming in and perching right beside us (*photo, left, below*), as did a **Moluccan Owlet-Nightjar**, both of which were visible from virtually the same spot, just minutes apart; If only all nightbirding could be like that!



**Moluccan Scops-Owl & Halmahera (Boobook) Hawk-Owl** Weda, Halmahera

**1<sup>st</sup> September****Halmahera (Bukit Lemba)**

On this great day's birding we visited a new and exciting area on northern Halmahera, which has only recently been granted access to. The area, **Bukit Lemba**, a mountain reaching some 1000m/ft., north of Weda Resort, makes for a good, if long, daytrip from the resort (by virtue of the 2-hour drive to reach it). The mountain has traditionally been off limits as it is privately controlled by Weda Nickel, a mining company, who has owned it for many years, but has yet to mine anything there! The forest is in great condition on the mountain, and the private road that leads up there is deserted, as only people with special permission are permitted to visit. Thankfully, due to the work of Robert Sinke, the owner of Weda Resort, this is now possible, when staying at his resort. The reason for visiting the mountain is simple, it allows access to several species that are almost impossible without this elevation, most notably the rare and beautiful *Moluccan King-Parrot*, the soon to be described *Halmahera Leaf-Warbler* (a surefire split to come from Island Leaf-Warbler), and *Rufous Fantail*, which has a very local distribution on the island. We could, therefore, not resist including this on our itinerary for the chance at these species, while searching for others we had not seen there, but were also possible around Weda too. It took a while to get there, with a brief stop on the way for our first decent views of perched **Moustached Treeswifts** (replacing *Gray-rumped Treeswifts* on Halmahera, which were seen on Sulawesi). As we reached the base of the mountain our first looker of the day was seen, with a fantastic male **Black-chinned Whistler** that circled our vehicle, (*photo page 41*). As we started to ascend the dirt road up the hill, some moved into the back of one of the pick-ups, so that we may have a better chance of seeing any flyover **Moluccan King-Parrots**, which then became possible from that point forward for much of the day. Not much further up the road that is exactly what happened, with a king-parrot flapping over the road at high speed, which was then seen by



some in a fortuitous position, perched too, before it disappeared from view. Whilst we lingered to try and improve our king-parrot experiences, we set about seeing some other birds; *White-naped Monarch* called back, but was unseen, but a **Drab Whistler** performed well, allowing long scope looks, as it sung regularly from the low treetops. A perched **Pacific Baza** was also much appreciated; and the same rich stretch of deserted road also brought us our first **Common Cicadabird** of the tour. The *baza* was a precursor to a good day for raptors with six species seen by the day's end, with the pick of the bunch, being a slow-flying **Pygmy Eagle** picked up by Stuart, while on the back of the pick-up. Other raptors seen that day included regulars like **Brahminy Kite** and **Spotted Kestrel**, as well as **Gurney's Eagle** and **Variable (Gray-throated) Goshawk**. **Red-cheeked Parrots** were especially numerous up there, with the odd flyover of **Chattering Lory** and **Violet-necked Lory** too. Moving on up the road, the morning heat quickly intensified and activity slowed. Indeed, much of the day was really quite slow, punctuated by moments of great birds, but we did have to work for them. Next up the road was an odd dove, our final of the endemic trio of fruit-doves we sought, when we managed to call in a superb male **Scarlet-breasted Fruit-Dove**, which lingered for long telescope views.



Our next stop was for a species-in-waiting, the **Halmahera Leaf-warbler**, which sounds and looks very different from the **Island Leaf-warbler** it has long been classified with. Our first stake out did not work out, but at the second try we managed great views of a vocal individual; by the day's end another three birds were heard along various parts of the mountain road. With the exception of around ten different **Rufous-bellied Trillers**, and a few **Cinnamon-bellied Imperial-Pigeons**, little else was seen pre-lunch, with a vocal *Rufous Fantail* failing to materialize. While we had a great picnic lunch of rice noodles and chicken, for the meat eaters, Bang-Bang finally located the local **Rufous Fantail**, which took some further work before we could all claim countable views of a scarce and local species on Halmahera. Post-lunch we continued up to the

highest point in the hope of a *Great Cuckoo-Dove* or *Halmahera Flowerpecker*, but in the heat of the day little was evident, and so we turned around and began to make our way slowly down. On the way back down a high-pitched canopy-based call had the cars being brought to halt, and thankfully it proved to be what was hoped, a red-spotted male **Halmahera Flowerpecker**, which showed well on several occasions, as it sang from the treetops. A small group of **Moluccan Cuckooshrikes** were seen by Sonia and Joyce in the same area, but most others missed them as they moved away quickly, and so they very much remained on our target list for the coming days.

A final stop near the lower end of the mountain was rewarded with our first proper looks at **Spangled Drongo**, and a fruiting tree, which attracted **Gray-headed and Blue-capped Fruit-Doves** and a **Moluccan Hanging-Parrot**. We also got some good looks at several low flying **Halmahera Swiftlets** in this area too, surprisingly scarce species. However, best of all was a male **Moluccan King-Parrot**, which crossed the road, revealing itself to Tina and Jack at least, but limited other people. This event caused us to remain for extended period in the area, when, finally, Tina put us out of our long-standing misery of the day, and found the male **Moluccan King-Parrot** perched close by, where it remained for killer looks over the next fifteen minutes or so. After all the struggles to get a good clinching view of the bird it was somewhat ironic that just minutes after we drove away from this great view, another pair of *king-parrots* slowly flapped over the road! On the way back to the resort some stayed out a little longer to try for **Barking Owl**, which was seen just briefly in flight, but while we waited for dusk to arrive, we did see another **Great-billed Parrot** and some **Long-billed Crows**, as the sky darkened.





**2<sup>nd</sup> September****Halmahera (Weda highlands)**

This was to be our second day in a highland area, although much lower, and closer than the one visited the day before. This involved only an hour's drive, and not the 2-hour slog needed the day before. While we had seen the majority of highland species the day before, there was one particular gaping hole in our bird list: *Purple Dollarbird* (*Azure Roller*), which we had not really tried for that this time, and the "Weda Highlands" offered our very best chance at finding it. However, in spite of much time in all the right areas that morning we left empty-handed as far as the dollarbird was concerned and therefore returned again in the afternoon for further search time. Our morning in the Weda highlands was, however, far from a waste of time, as we had a productive morning up there, adding some new ones to the bird list, and getting some important catch up birds for some who had not been present during previous showings for some species. An early find was mobs of **Moluccan Starlings**, which at that time only a few people had seen. On this occasion we got see plenty of them perched in the dead trees at length. The day before only some had been in the best position to see a fast-moving flock of **Moluccan Cuckooshrikes**, and so this was another major focus of the morning, and thankfully early on we found another pair of these for all to count. Others in the group wanted their first **Common Cicadabird**, (*photo page 42*), and one of these was soon lined up showing well at near eye level (unusual for this normally canopy dwelling species). It turned out to be a good day for *cuckooshrikes*, with **Rufous-bellied Trillers** also showing up in the highlands too (while later in the day **Halmahera and White-bellied Cuckooshrikes** were seen again closer to the resort). The next find was one of the best of the morning, and was very popular for the tour overall; when a **Great Cuckoo-Dove** responded brilliantly to tape (*photo below*), coming in and landing in full view, where it remained, calling back at us for five-ten minutes!

Some nice repeat performances were also put in with species we were already familiar with, such as a male **Moluccan Flycatcher** (**Slaty Monarch**), further **Gray-headed and Blue-capped Fruit-Doves**, and **Cinnamon-bellied Imperial-Pigeon**, as well as **Spangled Drongo**. We also finally tracked down a **Halmahera (Dusky-brown) Oriole**, a bird that we had heard often but not seen properly by that stage. People who were not familiar with the dowdiness of this species were also shocked to find it was not bright yellow, like many of the other Asian orioles! **Red-**



**cheeked Parrots** and **Red-flanked Lorikeets** were also conspicuous up there during our morning on site. One of the Moluccan specialties that we were strangely still missing at that point was the **Spectacled (Moluccan) Imperial-Pigeon**, which we'd heard several times, at distance, but had not got remotely close to one. On this morning though we heard one reasonably close and had even narrowed it down to a large, isolated tree, although it took some time before, eventually it flew into a nearer palm, where we could all get long views, before it retreated once more to dense cover. The highlands are fantastic for nectarivorous birds, and we saw multiple **Black Sunbirds**, and a fantastic, low male **Halmahera**

**Flowerpecker**, which Sonia noticed right near the end of the morning (*photo right*), much to Ian's delight, (as he had skipped the visit to Bukit Lemba to catch up on much needed sleep)!

We returned to Weda for more great food over lunch, and for a short break during the heat of the day; after which we got back in the vehicles and headed back towards the same highlands, with the dollarbird firmly in our sights for the afternoon. On the way there we stopped at a small hill, **Gunung Kobe**, where we finally got cracking looks at a gorgeous **White-naped Monarch** that allowed prolonged 'scope views for all. In the same area we also got another perched **Moluccan Hanging-Parrot**. There

were three main lookouts to try for the *dollarbird*, and after two came up blank, we were fearing the worst; until we reached the third one, and there standing sentry above were two beautiful **Purple Dollarbirds (Azure Rollers)**, which soon had the 'scope trained on them; a thrilling moment for all (*photo below*)! Heading back to the lodge some took a final shot at the *Barking Owl*, but came up with nothing, and tried in vain to see a calling *Rufous-tailed (Pale-vented) Bush-hen*, a short time before dusk, which remained hidden.



### 3<sup>rd</sup> September Halmahera

We had one final birding session around Weda in the morning, took a final fantastic lunch at the resort, before we packed up and headed back to Sofifi, from where we took speedboats back to the island of Ternate for the night, in order to connect with Manado-bound flights the next morning. With very few targets



remaining, we went after the few tricky ones left, *Rufous-tailed (Pale-vented) Bush-hen* and *Invisible (Drummer) Rail*; at least with the first one we got some strong vocal responses, even if we did not see the bird. However, in spite of walking into several areas of a Sago swamp for the rail, no birds were heard nor seen in a search of several hours. While some were in the swamp, others picked up **Paradise Crow** while birding the road. **Brush Cuckoo** put on a good show, and was a new bird for almost all, and likewise for a pair of **Spectacled Monarchs**, which had only showed poorly, and high in the trees earlier on the tour, and so was a welcome find. But mostly, this final day was about getting good looks at many species we had seen before: **Blue-and-white Kingfishers** perched in palm trees, and a **Sombre Kingfisher** doing likewise (*photo below*); **Pied Imperial-Pigeons** perched around Weda village; close flybys from a pair of **Great Cuckoo-Doves**, and a low perched **White Cockatoo** gave us our best close ups yet. Final views of good-looking birds like **Rufous-bellied Triller**, **Gray-headed Fruit-Dove** and **Eclectus Parrot** were also obtained. On the way to the dock, in the highlands, we noted another **Spotted Kestrel** and got a perched **Pacific Baza** for a brief period too, and the noisy mob of **Moluccan Starlings** was also present again. While our final stop of the tour was a deserted beach with some mangroves that held a pair of **Beach Kingfishers** that gave better views than we'd had from the rocking boat before! The speedboat ride back was fast, offering few opportunities to bird, but we did see several groups of Red-necked Phalaropes in flight and some frigatebirds passing overhead, before we docked at Ternate for the final night of the tour and the luxury of a business style, city hotel.



We had enjoyed a rare tour, with most of our endemic target birds seen, which made the competition tight for the Top Five Birds of the Tour. A mammoth 20 different species were nominated for this at the tour end, testament to the many impressive birds seen well on the trip. Although, this list was reduced to five worthy contenders, birds like **Moluccan Owlet-Nightjar**, **Moluccan Scrubfowl** (seen extremely well, by spotlight following a short 15-minute search, one night on a volcanic, black sandy beach on Halmahara), **Green-backed Kingfisher**, **Rusty-backed (Red-backed) Thrush**, and even the **Wallace's Standardwing** were not in the final top five! When excellent views of an endemic, and displaying bird-of-paradise does not make it worthy of inclusion with the top five birds of the tour, it reveals what a very special tour this is for the rare, the spectacular, and the "peculiar"!

#### TOP 5 BIRDS OF THE TOUR:

- |    |                                  |   |
|----|----------------------------------|---|
| 1  | <b>MALEO</b>                     | Tambun, Dumoga-Bone (Sulawesi)            |
| 2  | <b>MINAHASSA MASKED-OWL</b>      | Tangkoko (Sulawesi)                       |
| 3= | <b>SCALY-BREASTED KINGFISHER</b> | Gunung Mahawu (Sulawesi)                  |
| 3= | <b>GEOMALIA</b>                  | Anaso Track, Lore Lindu (Sulawesi)        |
| 5  | <b>SULAWESI DWARF-KINGFISHER</b> | Tangkoko & Toraut, Dumoga-Bone (Sulawesi) |

Some further photos from the tour...(Lilac-cheeked Kingfisher, Javan Pond-Heron & Rufous-bellied Triller)







**BIRD & MAMMAL LISTS:****BIRDS**

The taxonomy of the bird list follows: **Clements, James F., White, Anthony W., and Fitzpatrick, John W.** *The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World*. Cornell, 2007.

*This list is up to date with the major changes published by Cornell up until August 2015.*

**ME** denotes an endemic to the Moluccas.

**SE** denotes an endemic to the Sulawesi subregion.

**H** denotes a species that was *HEARD*, but not seen.

**GO** denotes a species that was seen by the *GUIDE ONLY*.

**EXT** denotes a bird that was only recorded on the Moluccas Extension (to Halmahera).

**DUCKS, GEESE and WATERFOWL: ANATIDAE**

**Wandering Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna arcuata*

*Just five birds were seen on a wetland near Kotamobagu.*

**Pacific Black Duck** *Anas superciliosa*

*One was seen in flight by a few in the group in Dumoga-Bone.*

**Sunda Teal** *Anas gibberifrons*

*Recorded three times only; on Lake Tambing (Lore Lindu), and again near Tambun (Dumoga-Bone).*

**MEGAPODES: MEGAPODIIDAE**

**Maleo** *Macrocephalon maleo*

**SE**

*A pair were seen excavating in readiness to lay, as we arrived at Tambun (Dumoga-Bone, Sulawesi); then later we were permitted to help with the daily release of chicks back into the wild there. VOTED AS THE BIRD OF THE TOUR.*

**Moluccan Scrubfowl** *Megapodius wallacei*

**EXT**

*Excellent views were had of a bird that landed closeby on the beach at Galela (Halmahera), after only 15 minutes of search time!*

**Tabon Scrubfowl** *Megapodius cumingii*

*Pairs were seen on three occasions in the forest at Tangkoko (Sulawesi). Also known as **Philippine Scrubfowl**.*

**Dusky Scrubfowl** *Megapodius freycinet*

**EXT**

*Two birds (presumably a pair), were seen at a newly established feeding site near Weda on Halmahera.*

**SHEARWATERS and PETRELS: FRIGATIDAE**

**Bulwer's Petrel** *Bulweria bulwerii*

*Three to four birds were seen briefly; two were seen very distantly by telescope, from the Grand Luley Resort in Manado (Sulawesi); and another flew closeby the speedboat, but was seen by only Sam, on the crossing from Ternate to Halmahera.*



FRIGATEBIRDS: *FRIGATIDAE***Great Frigatebird** *Fregata minor* **EXT**

Several birds were seen around the harbor on the Spice Island of Ternate.

**Lesser Frigatebird** *Fregata ariel*

Around 20 birds were identified offshore from Tangkoko, and others were seen in the channel between Ternate and Halmahera.

HERONS, EGRETS & BITTERNS: *ARDEIDAE***Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis*

One was seen briefly, by some, at a wetland at Kotamobagu (North Sulawesi).

**Black Bittern** *Ixobrychus flavicollis* **EXT**

A few of the group had a brief flight view only on Halmahera.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*

Six sightings in Central and North Sulawesi.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba*

Just a handful of sightings; at Makassar Fishponds in South Sulawesi, and in paddies near Dumoga-Bone in North Sulawesi. Also known as **Great White Egret**.

**Intermediate Egret** *Mesophyx intermedia*

One was seen within rice paddies near Tambun (Sulawesi).

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

Small numbers were seen in rice paddies in North Sulawesi, with a few more at Makassar Fishponds in South Sulawesi.

**Pacific Reef Heron** *Egretta sacra*

A black one was seen in the mangroves at Tangkoko (Sulawesi). Also known as **Pacific Reef-egret**.

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*

Scattered sightings throughout.

**Javan Pond-Heron** *Ardeola speciosa*

Encountered regularly on Sulawesi.

**Striated Heron** *Butorides striata*

Recorded at Makassar Fishponds (South Sulawesi), and around Tangkok and Dumoga-Bone, (both North Sulawesi).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*

A single immature was seen on the mangrove boat ride at Tangkoko by one of the boats.

OSPREY: *PANDIONIDAE***Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus cristatus* **EXT**

A pair were seen at Weda, on Halmahera.

\*These birds are of the **cristatus** race, which occurs in eastern Indonesia, New Guinea, Australia, and New Caledonia. This race is split off as **EASTERN OSPREY** *Pandion cristatus* on the IOC list.

HAWKS, EAGLES & KITES: *ACCIPITRIDAE***Barred (Sulawesi) Honey-Buzzard** *Pernis celebensis celebensis* **SE**

One was seen well in flight, on our first morning at Karaenta, near Makassar (South Sulawesi).

While currently not split under Clements; this is split from the Philippine forms under IOC and Handbook of the Birds of the World taxonomy. When split under IOC, this species is referred to as **Barred Honey-Buzzard**, and the other

**Philippine Honey-Buzzard**; under the HBW taxonomy the split species is named **Sulawesi Honey-Buzzard** and the same name as the IOC for the other species. When split, this then becomes a Sulawesi endemic.

**Pacific Baza** *Aviceda subcristata* **EXT**

One was seen perched at Bukit Lemba, and another pair was seen in the Weda highlands, both on Halmahera..

**Sulawesi Serpent-Eagle** *Spilornis rufipectus* **SE**

Seen four times; on three occasions (twice perched) at Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi), and again at Tambun in the north.

**Sulawesi Hawk-Eagle** *Nisaetus lanceolatus* **SE**

An adult bird was seen well perched by its recently occupied nest at Lake Tambing (Lore Lindu, Central Sulawesi), with another perched bird seen at Tangkoko in the north.

**Rufous-bellied Eagle** *Lophotriorchis kienerii*

3 sighting around the Sedoa Valley (Lore Lindu, Central Sulawesi), and seen again in very low flight over Gunung Mahawu in the north.

**Black Eagle** *Ictinaetus malayensis*

Recorded 4 times on Sulawesi; twice around Lore Lindu, and then again near Kotamobagu, and Gunung Mahawu, in the north of the island.

**Pygmy Eagle** *Hieraaetus weiskei* **EXT**

One of these scarce eagles was seen flying low overhead at Bukit Lemba on Halmahera.

Recently split from **Little Eagle** *H. morphnoides* of Australia.

**Gurney's Eagle** *Aquila gurneyi*

Four different birds were seen during our time on Halmahera. **EXT**

**Rufous-winged Buzzard** *Butastur liventer*

One was seen, both perched and in flight, in the Sedoa Valley, near Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi).

**Spotted Harrier** *Circus assimilis*

1 flew low over the fields at the base of Gunung Ambang.

**Sulawesi Goshawk** *Accipiter griseiceps* **SE**

A perched bird was found during a fortuitous toilet stop along the Molibagu Road, in Dumoga-Bone (Sulawesi).

**Spot-tailed Goshawk** *Accipiter trinotatus* **SE**

A young bird was well found within a deep forest patch by our local guide, Idris, at Lore Lindu.

**Variable Goshawk** *Accipiter hiogaster griseogularis* **ME EXT**

3 different birds were seen on Halmahera.

This is sometimes split off, and therefore becomes a Moluccan endemic, as **Grey-throated Goshawk** *A. griseogularis*.

**Small (Dwarf) Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nanus* **SE**

Prolonged views of 2 perched birds were had near Lake Tambing in Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi).

**Vinous-breasted Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter rhodogaster* **SE**

A nesting bird was shown to us at Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi), when an adult and juvenile were seen and photographed.

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*

Five birds were seen in the Dumoga-Bone area of North Sulawesi.

**Brahminy Kite** *Haliastur indicus*

Seen regularly in North Sulawesi.

**White-bellied Sea-Eagle** *Haliaetus leucogaster*

One flew over us one morning at a lookout at Tangkoko (North Sulawesi).



## RAILS, GALLINULES &amp; COOTS: RALLIDAE

**Buff-banded Rail***Gallirallus philippensis*

One was seen well on one of the fishponds at Makassar (South Sulawesi), and another 3 were seen on a paddy in North Sulawesi; finally, a last sighting came on a wetland near the city of Kotamobagu.

**Barred Rail***Gallirallus torquatus*

Seen on five days of the trip, all in North Sulawesi. Our best looks were obtained of a pair going to roost at Tangkoko.

**Isabelline Bush-hen***Amaurornis isabellina*

SE

Two sightings in North Sulawesi: A pair was seen well at Tangkoko one evening; and another three birds were seen wandering around the verges of the road, with a Barred Rail, at Gunung Mahawu.

**Rufous-tailed (Pale-vented) Bush-hen***Amaurornis moluccana*

EXT H

Frustratingly only heard on a few occasions whilst on Halmahera.

**White-browed Crake***Porzana cinerea*

Five birds were seen on a wetland near the city of Kotamobagu (North Sulawesi).

**Invisible (Drummer) Rail***Habroptila wallacii*

ME H

A close calling pair was heard but could not be found, in spite of much effort (near Weda on Halmahera).

**Black-backed Swampphen***Porphyrio indicus*

A single bird was seen in flight, by just a few people only, near Kotamobagu.

Purple Swampphen was recently (2015) split into 6 species; this one is confined to Southeast Asia.

**Eurasian (Common) Moorhen***Gallinula chloropus*

Six birds were seen on a wetland near Kotamobagu (North Sulawesi), along with the next species.

**Dusky Moorhen***Gallinula tenebrosa*

Ten birds were seen on a Kotamobagu wetland (North Sulawesi).

## STILTS &amp; AVOCETS: RECURVIROSTRIDAE

**Pied Stilt***Himantopus leucocephalus*

Small numbers were seen at Makassar Fishponds (South Sulawesi), and again in rice paddies in North Sulawesi.

This species is sometimes lumped (e.g. under HBW taxonomy) under a larger species, **Black-winged Stilt**, *H. himantopus*.

## PLOVERS &amp; LAPWINGS: CHARADRIIDAE

**Pacific Golden-Plover***Pluvialis fulva*

One was seen in a rice paddy close to Kotamobagu, in North Sulawesi.

**Lesser Sand-Plover***Charadrius mongolus*

A few were seen at the Grand Luley Resort in Manado (North Sulawesi).

**Greater Sand-Plover***Charadrius leschenaultia*

One was seen on the mangrove boat trip in Tangkoko (North Sulawesi), and another 2 were seen at the Grand Luley Resort in Manado.

**Javan Plover***Charadrius javanicus*

2 were found at the last minute at Makassar Fishponds (South Sulawesi), and could be watched for some time.

**Little Ringed Plover***Charadrius dubius*

Three birds were seen on our first afternoon, at Makassar Fishponds (South Sulawesi).

**SANDPIPERS & ALLIES: SCOLOPACIDAE****Terek Sandpiper****Xenus gallinaceus**

One was seen late one afternoon on the jetty at the Grand Luley Resort in Manado (North Sulawesi).

**Common Sandpiper****Actitis hypoleucos**

Recorded at Makassar Fishponds (South Sulawesi), and also at the Grand Luley Resort (North Sulawesi).

**Gray-tailed Tattler****Tringa brevipes**

A small group was seen roosting in the mangroves at the Grand Luley Resort near Manado (North Sulawesi).

**Common Greenshank****Tringa nebularia**

Two singles were seen; one at Makassar (South Sulawesi), and another in rice paddies in the north..

**Wood Sandpiper****Tringa glareola**

Commonly recorded in rice paddies in North Sulawesi, with good numbers also at Makassar Fishponds in the south.

**Whimbrel****Numenius phaeopus**

Up to ten birds were seen around the mangroves at the Grand Luley Resort near Manado (North Sulawesi).

**Sharp-tailed Sandpiper****Calidris acuminata**

A single bird was found in some rice paddies, on the journey between Manado and Kotamobagu (North Sulawesi).

**Curlew Sandpiper****Calidris ferruginea**

At least ten birds were seen at Makassar Fishponds (South Sulawesi).

**Long-toed Stint****Calidris subminuta**

2 birds were seen at Makassar Fishponds (South Sulawesi).

**Red-necked Stint****Calidris ruficollis**

A good number of these stints were seen at Makassar (South Sulawesi). Sometimes called **Rufous-necked Stint**.

**Red-necked Phalarope****Phalaropus lobatus**

A few small groups were seen in flight, during the boat crossings to and from Halmahera.

**BUTTONQUAIL: TURNICIDAE****Red-backed Buttonquail****Turnix maculosus**

Three or four birds were seen near Palu (Central Sulawesi), including one bird that walked out in front of us all!

**Barred Buttonquail****Turnix suscitator**

A pair showed very well late on our first morning at Bantimurung (South Sulawesi).

**GULLS, TERNS & SKIMMERS: LARIDAE****Little Tern****Sternula albifrons**

Regularly seen at Makassar Fishponds (South Sulawesi), the only site that it was recorded.

**Whiskered Tern****Chlidonias hybrida**

Carol saw one of these terns at Makassar (South Sulawesi).

**Common Tern****Sterna hirundo**

A handful of these terns were seen from the jetty at the Grand Luley Resort (near Manado, North Sulawesi); others were seen on the Ternate-Halmahera crossing.

**Great Crested Tern****Thalasseus bergii**

A few were seen on from the boat from Ternate to Halmahera.



## PIGEONS &amp; DOVES: COLUMBIDAE

**Rock Pigeon***Columba livia**Scattered sightings around urban areas.***Red Collared-Dove***Streptopelia tranquebarica**Recorded four times on the tour; in Palu (Central Sulawesi), and in North Sulawesi, between Manado and Kotamobagu.***Spotted Dove***Streptopelia chinensis**Regularly seen in North Sulawesi.***Slender-billed (Brown) Cuckoo-Dove***Macropygia amboinensis**Recorded regularly through the tour; seen on all but a handful of days of the trip.***Great Cuckoo-Dove***Reinwardtoena reinwardtii***EXT***Seen twice in the Weda area of Halmahera, with a smashing bird seen at length perches in the highlands there. One of 20 species listed as contenders for the bird of the trip.***White-faced Cuckoo-Dove***Turacoena manadensis***SE***Just one was seen perched on our last morning in Tangkoko (North Sulawesi). Also known as **Sulawesi Black Pigeon**.***Emerald Dove***Chalcophaps indica**One car saw one of these along the road into Tambun in Dumoga-Bone (North Sulawesi).***Stephan's Dove***Chalcophaps stephani**One was seen from two of the cars (of three cars total), on our first morning at Tangkoko (North Sulawesi).***Zebra Dove***Geopelia striata***GO***One was seen on the drive to Kotamobagu, and others heard at the Grand Luley Resort in Manado (North Sulawesi).***Nicobar Pigeon***Caloenas nicobarica***GO***An amazing view of a bird on the ground was had by most (if not all) while coming out from the Standardwing display site at Weda, on Halmahera.***Sulawesi Ground-Dove***Gallicolumba tristigmata***SE***Amazingly, three separate birds were seen during our first ascent of the Anaso Track (Lore Lindu, Central Sulawesi), two close flybys, and another that lingered on the trail for at least a few to see grounded. A rare bird, and one we were lucky to see, even if all did not get to see it.***Pink-necked (Green) Pigeon***Treron vernans**Theo found a small group of them on the journey to Kotamobagu (North Sulawesi).***Gray-cheeked (Green) Pigeon***Treron griseicauda**A single was seen from a lookout at Tangkoko, and two other sightings were had in Dumoga-Bone (all North Sulawesi).***Red-eared Fruit-Dove***Ptilinopus fischeri***SE***Seen on all four days in Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi).***Maroon-chinned Fruit-Dove***Ptilinopus epla***SE***A pair were found skillfully by the local ranger/guide, Max, at Tambun, and another was located by Jack later that same day at Toraut (both in Dumoga-Bone, North Sulawesi).**This form has been split by both Clements and on the IOC checklist, although on the latter list is given the name **Oberholser's Fruit-Dove**, now considered separate from the two other forms in the Banggai and Sula Islands.***Scarlet-breasted Fruit-Dove***Ptilinopus bernsteinii***ME****EXT***A male gave good views at Bukit Lemba on Halmahera; another was seen by Sam in the Weda highlands.*

**Superb Fruit-Dove***Ptilinopus superb**(Near endemic?)*

Seen at three places on Sulawesi; at Lore Lindu, Tangkoko, and Gunung Mahawu. The best views came at Tangkoko, where a stunning male posed in a fruiting tree with a male Black-naped Fruit-Dove alongside. This view was responsible for its nomination in the top five birds of the trip vote by Carol.

NB. This form, which is confined to Sulawesi and the Sula Islands of the Philippines, has been split off as **Western Superb Fruit-Dove** *P. temminckii* under the taxonomy used in the Handbook of the Birds of the World, and would therefore be a near endemic.

**Blue-capped Fruit-Dove***Ptilinopus monacha***ME** **EXT**

Seen around 6 times on Halmahera.

**Gray-headed Fruit-Dove***Ptilinopus hyogastrus***ME** **EXT**

Seen regularly whilst on Halmahera.

**Black-naped Fruit-Dove***Ptilinopus melanospilus*

Seen twice at Tangkoko (North Sulawesi), with stunning views of one particular male sharing a fruiting tree with a male Superb Fruit-Dove on our last morning there.

**White-bellied Imperial-Pigeon***Ducula forsteni***SE**

This stunning pigeon was seen first at Lore Lindu in Central Sulawesi, then better later in Tangkoko in North Sulawesi. Just two were seen.

**Gray-headed Imperial-Pigeon***Ducula radiata***SE**

Three sightings; three were seen by Lake Tambing in Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi), and two singles were seen at Tangkoko and on the Molibagu Road, both in North Sulawesi.

**Green Imperial-Pigeon***Ducula aenea*

The distinctive **paulina** race on Sulawesi, with a bright rusty collar, was seen at three sites: Lore Lindu (Central), Tangkoko, and Dumoga-Bone (both North Sulawesi).

**Spectacled Imperial-Pigeon***Ducula perspicillata***ME** **EXT**

Only recorded once during our time on Halmahera, in the Weda highlands.

Also known as **Moluccan Imperial-Pigeon** or **White-spectacled Imperial-Pigeon**.

**Cinnamon-bellied Imperial-Pigeon***Ducula basilica***ME** **EXT**

Seen on at least four occasions on Halmahera.

**Pied Imperial-Pigeon***Ducula bicolor*

Several groups were seen on Halmahera, and a few were seen at the back of the Grand Luley Resort near Manado (North Sulawesi).

**Silver-tipped Imperial-Pigeon***Ducula luctuosa***SE**

Small numbers were recorded daily at Tangkoko.

**Sombre Pigeon***Cryptophaps poecilorrhoa***SE**

This inconspicuous pigeon was seen perched up in the 'scope, during our second ascent of the Anaso Track, Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi).

**CUCKOOS: CUCULIDAE****Brush (Rusty-breasted) Cuckoo***Cacomantis variolosus virescens*

Seen at least three times in Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi).

This is split off from Brush Cuckoo, as **Rusty-breasted Cuckoo** *Cacomantis sepulcralis*, on the IOC checklist.

**Brush Cuckoo***Cacomantis variolosus infaustus***EXT**

One was seen very well on our final morning at Weda, Halmahera.



**Little Bronze-Cuckoo***Chrysococcyx minutillus russatus.*

Singles were seen on both of our short visits to a site near Palu, in Central Sulawesi. Others were heard at Lore Lindu. This form is sometimes considered a separate species, **Gould's Bronze-Cuckoo** *C. russatus*.

**Black-billed Koel***Eudynamis melanorhynchus***SE**

A showy bird was seen on our first afternoon at Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi), heard regularly elsewhere on the island.

**Channel-billed Cuckoo***Scythrops novaehollandiae***GO**

Two birds overflew us en-route to Bukit Lemba on Halmahera, but were only seen by Sam and Bang-Bang.

**Yellow-billed Malkoha***Phaenicophaeus calyborhynchus***SE**

Stuart and some others picked this up first on our final morning in Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi); the rest of us caught up with the species later at Tangkoko (North Sulawesi), with others being seen around Dumoga-Bone too.

**Bay Coucal***Centropus celebensis***SE**

Seen just a couple of times, both in North Sulawesi, at Tangkoko and Dumoga-Bone.

**Goliath Coucal***Centropus goliath***ME**

This striking and hulking Moluccan endemic was seen on two separate occasions on Halmahera; with three being seen particularly well while clambering around some roadside coconut palms, en-route to Weda. Nominated by one person as their top bird of the tour.

**Lesser Coucal***Centropus bengalensis*

Seen on five occasions; at Sedoa (near Lore Lindu, Central Sulawesi), and around Dumoga-Bone and at the base of Gunung Amban, both in North Sulawesi. Another single was seen briefly on Halmahera.

**BARN-OWLS: TYTONIDAE****Minahassa Masked-Owl***Tyto inexpectata***SE**

One of our local guides at Tangkoko, remarkably, found a bird roosting low down in the daytime; this was voted as one of the TOP FIVE BIRDS OF THE TOUR.

**Sulawesi Masked-Owl***Tyto rosenbergii***SE**

Seen twice; once at Tangkoko, when it was spotlight flying around at night, and again at Toraut (Dumoga-Bone); both in North Sulawesi

**OWLS: STRIGIDAE****Moluccan Scops-Owl***Otus magicus***EXT**

Seen twice on Halmahera; once at Galela before we tried for the Moluccan Scrubfowl, and then in the grounds of Weda Resort.

**Sulawesi Scops-Owl***Otus manadensis***SE**

A very co-operative bird was seen at night twice, within the grounds of our simple Tangkoko lodge (North Sulawesi).

**Barking Owl***Ninox ochracea***EXT**

Just a short flight view was all we could muster of this bird, near Weda Resort on Halmahera.

**Ochre-bellied Boobook***Ninox ochracea***SE**

Three roosting birds were found (a single and a pair), by our excellent local guide in Tangkoko (North Sulawesi), while Dave also saw one in the eves of our lodge at Tangkoko too. Also known as **Ochre-bellied Hawk-Owl**.

**Cinnabar Boobook***Ninox Ios***SE**

One was seen at Lore Lindu, and another was seen at Gunung Ambang (Central and North Sulawesi). Also known as **Cinnabar Hawk-Owl**.

**Halmahera Boobook***Ninox hypogramma***ME****EXT**

Excellent views of a pair were had near Weda, Halmahera. Also known as **Halmahera Hawk-Owl**.

**Speckled Boobook***Ninox punctulata***SE**

A pair were seen at night near our lodging close to Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi), and another pair was seen in the day at Toraut (Dumoga-Bone, North Sulawesi). Also known as **Speckled Hawk-Owl**.

**OWLET-NIGHTJARS: AEGOTHELIDAE****Moluccan Owlet-Nightjar***Aegotheles crinifrons***ME****EXT**

Seen well within the grounds of our resort in Weda, Halmahera.

**NIGHTJARS & ALLIES: CAPRIMULGIDAE****Diabolical Nightjar***Eurostopodus diabolicus***SE**

Four different birds were seen roosting along the Anaso Track (Lore Lindu, Central Sulawesi) on the first ascent there, with another two seen there the next day also. One was also spotlighted as it landed on the track in front of us during the dark on the first day there too. Also known as **Satanic or Heinrich's Nightjar**.

**Great Eared-Nightjar***Lyncornis macrotis*

Scattered sightings throughout (Lore Lindu, Manado), but the best views were a roosting pair at Tangkoko (N Sulawesi).

**Large-tailed Nightjar***Caprimulgus macrurus***EXT**

One was seen at night by the beach Galela, another was seen by Stuart near Weda too (both Halmahera).

**Sulawesi Nightjar***Caprimulgus celebensis***SE**

This bird, as it often is, proved difficult at Tangkoko (N Sulawesi), and took four tries, before we got a great look at a perched bird in the spotlight.

**Savanna Nightjar***Caprimulgus affinis*

Around six birds were seen at dusk flying around the Makassar Fishponds (S Sulawesi), with another six birds seen during the daytime at a roosting area near Palu (C Sulawesi).

**SWIFTS: APODIDAE****Purple Needletail***Hirundapus celebensis*

A flock of around 25 birds was seen gliding above Toraut (Dumoga-Bone, N Sulawesi), one afternoon.

**Glossy Swiftlet***Collocala esculenta*

A very common species on this tour, recorded on every single day.

**Sulawesi Swiftlet***Aerodramus sororum***SE**

Good numbers were seen in the Sedoa Valley, near Lore Lindu (C Sulawesi). This is lumped with **Sulawesi Swiftlet** under HBW taxonomy, and named **Moluccan Swiftlet, A. infuscatus**.

**Halmahera Swiftlet***Aerodramus infuscatus***ME****EXT**

A few were seen on the journey to Weda, with others seen better at Bukit Lemba (both Halmahera). This is lumped with **Sulawesi Swiftlet** under HBW taxonomy, and named **Moluccan Swiftlet, A. infuscatus**.

**Uniform Swiftlet***Aerodramus vanikorensis*

Regularly recorded on both Sulawesi and Halmahera.

**House Swift***Apus nipalensis*

A few were seen around Makassar in South Sulawesi.

**Asian Palm-Swift***Cypsiurus balasiensis*

A few were seen in Central Sulawesi.



TREESWIFTS: *HEMIPROCINIDAE***Gray-rumped Treeswift** *Hemiprocne longipennis*

Recorded on six days on Sulawesi.

**Moustached Treeswift** *Hemiprocne mystacea*

A few were seen on most days on Halmahera.

EXT

KINGFISHERS: *ALDEDINIDAE***Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

A couple of fleeting glimpses were had on the mangrove ride at Tangkoko; others were seen at the Grand Luley Resort (Manado), and near Kotamobagu (all N Sulawesi).

**Sulawesi Dwarf-Kingfisher** *Ceyx fallax*

SE

Seen well on two occasions, thanks to the work of the excellent local guides at Tangkoko and Toraut (both N Sulawesi).

**North Moluccan Dwarf-Kingfisher** *Ceyx uropygialis*

ME EXT H

Frustratingly only heard during the search for Invisible Rail on Halmahera.

**Lilac-cheeked Kingfisher** *Cittura cyanotis*

SE

Six birds were seen on our first full day in Tangkoko, with another one seen the following day there (N Sulawesi).

**Great-billed Kingfisher** *Pelargopsis melanoryhyncha*

SE

Two to three birds were seen during the mangrove boat ride in Tangkoko (N Sulawesi). Also known as **Black-billed Kingfisher**.

**Ruddy Kingfisher** *Halcyon coromanda*

One was seen by most people in the lodge grounds at Tangkoko, with another seen well by all resting in the mangroves there (N Sulawesi).

**Blue-and-white Kingfisher** *Todiramphus diops*

ME EXT

A few were seen on most days on Halmahera, mostly perched on roadside wires.

**Collared Kingfisher** *Todiramphus chloris*

Seen on at least thirteen days of the tour; seen on both Sulawesi and Halmahera.

**Sombre Kingfisher** *Todiramphus funebris*

ME EXT

Seen four times in the Weda area of Halmahera.

**Beach Kingfisher** *Todiramphus saurophagus*

EXT

One was seen from the boat near Sidangoli, and another pair were seen near Sofifi, (both Halmahera).

**Sacred Kingfisher** *Todiramphus sanctus*

In Sulawesi, seen at Makassar and Kotamobagu, with several further sightings on Halmahera.

**Green-backed Kingfisher** *Actenoides monachus monachus*

SE

*Actenoides monachus capucinus*

Two different forms were seen; one at Karaenta (S Sulawesi) was seen by some, which is split off in Handbook of the Birds of the World as **Black-headed Kingfisher**, *A. capucinus*; while at Tangkoko we saw the more readily seen blue-headed monachus race/species around eight times in Tangkoko, with a couple of extra seen around Dumoga-Bone (N Sulawesi).

**Scaly-breasted Kingfisher** *Actenoides princeps*

SE

A fantastic ultra-confiding juvenile was seen at Gunung Mahawu (N Sulawesi). Voted as ONE OF THE TOP FIVE BIRDS OF THE TOUR. Also known as **Scaly Kingfisher**.

**Common Paradise-Kingfisher** *Tanyiptera galatea*

EXT

One was seen well by Ian and a few others only en-route to Weda; very little response from others during our time there.

**BEE-EATERS: MEROPIDAE****Purple-bearded Bee-eater**      *Meropogon forsteni***SE***Seen very well twice along the Anaso Track, Lore Lindu (S Sulawesi).***Blue-tailed Bee-eater**      *Merops phillipinus**A number of these were seen around Palu (C Sulawesi).***Rainbow Bee-eater**      *Merops ornatus***EXT***A couple of sightings on Halmahera, with one group of nine birds or so.***ROLLERS: CORACIIDAE****Purple-winged Roller**      *Coracias temminckii***SE***Four were seen on our first morning at Tangkoko, and another in Dumoga Bone (both N Sulawesi).***(Common) Dollarbird**      *Eurystomus orientalis**Recorded at Tangkoko (N Sulawesi), and also on Halmahera.***Azure Roller**      *Eurystomus azureus***ME****EXT***Two visits to the Weda highlands were needed before we found a pair of these striking birds.**\*Also known as **Purple Dollarbird**.***HORNBILLS: BUCEROTIDAE****Sulawesi (Dwarf) Hornbill**      *Penelopides exarhatus***SE***Seen first at Karaenta (S Sulawesi), then again in Tangkoko and Dumoga-Bone in the north.***Knobbed Hornbill**      *Aceros cassidix***SE***First seen in Central Sulawesi, in the Sedoa Valley, with better looks coming in Tangkoko in the north. Seen six times.***Blyth's Hornbill**      *Aceros plicatus**Recorded daily on Halmahera.***WOODPECKERS: PICIDAE****Sulawesi (Pygmy) Woodpecker**      *Dendrocopos temminckii***SE***Seen on five occasions around Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi).***Ashy Woodpecker**      *Mulleripicus fulvus***SE***A pair was seen very well at Tangkoko, and another was seen up on Gunung Ambang (both N Sulawesi).***FALCONS & CARACARAS: FALCONIDAE****Spotted Kestrel**      *Falco moluccensis**Seen on six occasions, in South and North Sulawesi, and Halmahera.***Oriental Hobby**      *Falco severus**One was seen from a lookout near Tangkoko (N Sulawesi).***COCKATOOS: CACATUIDAE****White Cockatoo**      *Cacatua alba***ME****EXT***One or two were seen on each day on Halmahera.*



PARROTS: *PSITTACIDAE*

- Moluccan King-Parrot** *Alisterus amboinensis* **EXT**  
*A fantastic scarlet male was seen well perched, thanks to Tina finding it under our noses, at Bukit Lemba on Halmahera. In our day there the bird was seen in flight several other times too.*
- Golden-mantled Raquet-tail** *Prioniturus platurus* **SE**  
*Seen in flight (and sometimes low) along the Anaso Track in Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi), although the best views were had in North Sulawesi, from the lookout near Tangkoko.*
- Yellow-breasted Raquet-tail** *Prioniturus flavicans* **SE**  
*Endemic to North Sulawesi and near islands. Seen well perched at Tangkoko, with another seen at Toraut too.*
- Eclectus Parrot** *Eclectus roratus*  
*A few were seen on four of our days in Halmahera; all were emerald-green males.*
- Red-cheeked Parrot** *Geoffroyus geoffroyi* **EXT**  
*Seen regularly on Halmahera.*
- Great-billed Parrot** *Tanygnathus megalorhynchus* **EXT**  
*Two short flyovers were had in the Weda area of Halmahera.*
- Azure-rumped Parrot** *Tanygnathus sumatranus*  
*A couple of pairs were seen perched at Tangkoko (N Sulawesi).  
 Also known as **Blue-backed Parrot**.*
- Red-flanked Lorikeet** *Charmosyna placensis* **EXT**  
*Seen on several days on Halmahera, including some great perched views.*
- Chattering Lory** *Lorius garrulous* **ME** **EXT**  
*Seen in flight on three occasions on Halmahera, including up on Bukit Lemba.*
- Violet-necked Lory** *Eos squamata* **EXT**  
*Pairs were seen a couple of times perched, whilst on Halmahera.*
- Ornate Lorikeet** *Trichoglossus ornatus* **SE**  
*Seen perched on two occasions in Tangkoko (North Sulawesi).*
- Yellow-and-green Lorikeet** *Trichoglossus flavoviridis* **SE**  
*Very conspicuous at Danau Tambing in Lore Lindu National Park (Central Sulawesi), with repeated views there, including some birds which were nesting in the base of a **Sulawesi Hawk-Eagle** nest. Also known as **Citrine Lorikeet**.*
- Sulawesi Hanging-Parrot** *Loriculus stigmatus* **SE**  
*Good views were had at Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi), and Tangkoko (in North Sulawesi). Also known as **Large Sulawesi Hanging-Parrot**.*
- Moluccan Hanging-Parrot** *Loriculus amabilis* **ME** **EXT**  
*Seen perched on four occasions on Halmahera.*
- Pygmy Hanging-Parrot** *Loriculus exilis* **SE**  
*One was seen perched close to a lookout near Tangkoko (North Sulawesi). Also known as **Small Sulawesi Hanging-Parrot**.*

PITTAS: *PITTIDAE*

- Sulawesi Pitta** *Erythropitta celebensis* **SE**  
*Perhaps the most disappointing bird of the tour; normally straightforward to find at Tangkoko (where indeed they had been just a few weeks earlier), but they were not seen by any groups during our stay there. We managed just a short glimpse of the only bird we heard on the entire tour, along the Molibagu Road (Dumoga-Bone, North Sulawesi).  
 This was a recent split from **Red-bellied Pitta**, which was divided into 16 species.*

**Moluccan Pitta***Erythropitta rufiventris***ME** **EXT**

One was skillfully found by Bang-Bang (our local guide at Weda), and then 'scoped up, on Halmahera. Nominated by one person as one of their TOP FIVE BIRDS OF THE TOUR.

This was a recent split from **Red-bellied Pitta**, which was divided into 16 species.

**Ivory-breasted Pitta***Pitta maxima***ME** **EXT**

One scoped in the canopy near Weda (Halmahera), was seen by all; Carol also had another one later that day.

Nominated by one person, in their TOP FIVE BIRDS OF THE TOUR.

**HONEYEATERS: MELIPHAGIDAE****White-streaked Friarbird***Melitograis gilolensis***ME**

Seen three or four times on Halmahera, although usually brief, with only some people seeing it on each occasion.

\*This species is confined to the northern Moluccas.

**Dusky Myzomela***Myzomela obscura simplex***ME**

Seen twice on Halmahera.

Also known as **Dusky Honeyeater**.

**Sulawesi Myzomela***Myzomela chloroptera***SE**

Seen a few times around Lake Taming in Lore Lindu National Park in Central Sulawesi, but better looks came at Gunung Mahawu in North Sulawesi, where a gorgeous red-headed male was seen at length.

**Dark-eared Myza***Myza celebensis***SE**

Seen five times in Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi). Also known as **Lesser Sulawesi Honeyeater**.

**White-eared Myza***Myza sarasinorum***SE**

A few were seen on the upper sections of the Anaso Track in Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi). Also known as **Greater Sulawesi Honeyeater**.

**THORNBILLS & ALLIES: ACANTHIZIDAE****Golden-bellied Gerygone***Gerygone sulphurea*

Very common, by voice, in many areas; but seen only at Makassar Fishponds (South Sulawesi), and at the Grand Luley Resort near Manado (North Sulawesi). Also known as **Flyeater**.

**WOODSWALLOWS: ARTAMIDAE****Ivory-backed Woodswallow***Artamus monachus***SE**

A good tour for the species; two distant flight views in Lore Lindu (C Sulawesi), were followed by better perched and flight views in Tangkoko (including within our lodge grounds, and then lastly along the Molibagu Road in Dumoga-Bone (North Sulawesi).

**White-breasted Woodswallow***Artamus leucorhynchus*

Recorded six times on the tour, on both Sulawesi and Halmahera.

**CUCKOOSHRIKES: CAMPEPHAGIDAE****Pied Cuckooshrike***Coracina bicolor***SE**

Arguably the toughest of the endemic cuckooshrikes to find; we saw a pair one afternoon at Toraut (North Sulawesi).

**Cerulean Cuckooshrike***Coracina temminckii***SE**

Seen three times around Lake Taming in Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi).



**White-bellied Cuckooshrike** *Coracina papuensis*

Seen on 4 occasions on Halmahera.

**Moluccan Cuckooshrike** *Coracina atriceps*

**ME** **EXT**

Two groups were seen in the highlands of Halmahera.

**White-rumped Cuckooshrike** *Coracina leucopygia*

**SE**

Two pairs were seen in the mangroves at Tangkoko, and another group was seen at the Grand Luley Resort (N Sulawesi).

**White-shouldered Triller** *Lalage sueurii*

A male was seen at Makassar Fishponds (South Sulawesi), and a handful of them were seen near Palu (Central Sulawesi).

**White-rumped Triller** *Lalage leucopygialis*

**SE**

One was seen from the lookout close to Tangkoko (North Sulawesi). Also known as **Sulawesi Triller**.

**Rufous-bellied Triller** *Lalage aurea*

**ME** **EXT**

This striking and handsome cuckooshrike was seen regularly on Halmahera, with up to ten seen in a single day. Confined to the northern Moluccas.

**Halmahera Cuckooshrike** *Celebesia parvula*

**ME** **EXT**

Two different pairs were seen at Weda on Halmahera.

Endemic to the island of Halmahera.

**Pygmy Cuckooshrike** *Celebesia abbotti*

**SE**

A couple were seen around Lake Taming, and another in the Sedoa Valley, near Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi).

**Sulawesi Cicadabird** *Edolisoma morio*

**SE**

Seen twice in the Sedoa Valley, near Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi).

**Common Cicadabird** *Edolisoma tenuirostre*

**EXT**

Seen on two occasions in the highlands of Halmahera.

**WHISTLERS & ALLIES: PACHYCEPHALIDAE****Maroon-backed Whistler** *Coracornis raveni*

**SE**

Despite many, many attempts to try and see this species, it was only seen by Theo and Ian, when they were away from the rest of the group, along the Anaso Track in Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi).

**Black-chinned Whistler** *Pachycephala mentalis*

**ME** **EXT**

A single, stunning male was seen well on Halmahera, where they were common by voice. Sometimes considered a race of **Golden Whistler** *P. pectoralis*.

**Sulphur-bellied Whistler** *Pachycephala sulfuriventer*

**SE**

Commonly encountered in the mountains of Sulawesi. Also known as **Yellow-vented/Sulphur-vented Whistler**.

**Drab Whistler** *Pachycephala griseonata*

**ME** **EXT**

Two were seen on Halmahera, with long scope looks at Bukit Lemba.

**OLD WORLD ORIOLES: ORIOLIDAE****Halmahera Oriole** *Oriolus phaeochromus*

**ME**

Recorded two times on Halmahera. Also known as **Dusky-brown Oriole**. Endemic to the island of Halmahera.

**Black-naped Oriole** *Oriolus chinensis*

Seen six times in North Sulawesi, at Tangkoko, and Dumoga-Bone.

**DRONGOS: DICRURIDAE****Hair-crested Drongo** *Dicrurus hottentottus leucops*

The striking, white-eyed, **leucops** race was seen in Karaenta, Tangkoko, and Dumoga Bone.

**Sulawesi Drongo** *Dicrurus montanus***SE**

Seen in Lore Lindu and Gunung Ambang.

**Spangled Drongo** *Dicrurus bracteatus***EXT**

Recorded several times on Halmahera.

**FANTAILS: RHIPIDURIDAE****Willie-wagtail** *Rhipidura leucophrys***EXT**

A daily feature on Halmahera.

**Rusty-bellied Fantail** *Rhipidura teysmanni***SE**

A regular flock follower encountered both at Gunung Ambang and Lore Lindu.

\*Also known as **Rusty-flanked Fantail**.

**Rufous Fantail** *Rhipidura rufifrons torrida***EXT**

The rare north Moluccan race was seen at Bukit Lemba, a new site on this tour on Halmahera.

**MONARCH FLYCATCHERS: MONARCHIDAE****Pale-blue Monarch** *Hypothymis puella***SE**

This recent split from **Black-naped Monarch**, was seen at Karaenta, Tangkoko, and Dumoga-Bone.

**White-naped Monarch** *Carterornis pileatus***EXT**

Seen twice at Weda (Halmahera), with the second viewing involving a bird that lingered in an open spot for some time.

**Spectacled Monarch** *Symposiachrus trivirgatus bimaculatus***EXT**

Encountered twice on Halmahera, in the Moluccas.

This subspecies is sometimes referred to as a separate species, **Moluccan Monarch**, *S. bimaculatus*.

**Moluccan (Slaty) Flycatcher** *Myiagra galeata***ME****EXT**

Seen very well on at least three occasions on Halmahera, with both males and females seen.

**Shining Flycatcher** *Myiagra alecto***EXT**

Males were seen at least twice on Halmahera.

Named **Common Shining Flycatcher** in the Handbook of the Birds of the World.

**CROWS, JAYS & MAGPIES: CORVIDAE****Slender-billed Crow** *Corvus enca*

Regularly encountered at lowland sites on Sulawesi.

**Long-billed Crow** *Corvus validus***ME****EXT**

This strange, and distinctive, crow was seen three or four times on Halmahera.

**Piping Crow** *Corvus typicus***SE**

Just one bird was seen, which flew over us calling, at Karaenta (South Sulawesi).

**Torresian Crow** *Corvus orru***EXT**

One flew over the vehicle at Bukit Lemba, Halmahera, which was seen by just a couple of people in the group.



**BIRDS-OF-PARADISE: PARADISAEIDAE**

**Paradise-crow** *Lycocorax pyrrhopterus* **ME** **EXT**

Seen twice on Halmahera.

**Standardwing Bird-of-paradise** *Semioptera wallacii* **ME** **EXT**

At least three males were seen doing their extraordinary displays near Weda Resort. Strangely nominated by just two people in their TOP FIVE BIRDS OF THE TOUR list.

\*Also known as **Wallace's Standardwing**.

**SWALLOWS: HIRUNDINIDAE**

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

Seen twice only on Sulawesi, with some ten birds seen on one day near Tambun (Dumoga-Bone, North Sulawesi).

**Pacific Swallow** *Hirundo tahitica*

Recorded regularly throughout the tour, on Sulawesi and Halmahera.

**FAIRY-FLYCATCHERS: STENOSTIRIDAE**

**Citrine Canary-Flycatcher** *Culicicapa helianthea*

Recorded at Lore Lindu, Gunung Ambang, and Gunung Mahawu on Sulawesi.

**BULBULS: PYCNONOTIDAE**

**Sooty-headed Bulbul** *Pycnonotus aurigaster*

Seen regularly throughout the tour in Sulawesi; an introduced species.

**Yellow-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus goiavier*

Several were seen around Makassar Fishponds (South Sulawesi).

**Halmahera Golden Bulbul** *Alophoixus chloris* **ME** **EXT**

Regularly noted on Halmahera. Recently split from **Northern Golden Bulbul**, this is now an endemic to the northern Moluccas.

**BUSH-WARBLER & ALLIES: CETTIIDAE**

**Mountain Tailorbird** *Phyllergates cucullatus*

Recorded regularly at highland sites on Sulawesi.

**LEAF WARBLERS: PHYLLOSCOPIDAE**

**Sulawesi Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus sarasinorum* **SE**

A commonly encountered montane endemic, within feeding flocks in the highlands of Sulawesi.

**Island Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus poliocephalus henrietta* **ME** **EXT**

One was seen well at Bukit Lemba, in a day trip from Weda Resort on Halmahera. A surefire split-in-waiting from the wider, and very different Island Leaf Warbler. Sometimes referred to in reports as "**Halmahera Leaf Warbler**".

**REED-WARBLERS & ALLIES: ACROCEPHALIDAE**

**Clamorous Reed-Warbler** *Acrocephalus stentoreus*

Two were seen in mangroves around the edges of Makassar Fishponds (South Sulawesi).

GRASSBIRDS & ALLIES: *LOCUSTELLIDAE***Malia*****Malia grata*****SE**

Seen a few times within mixed feeding flocks at Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi), and another pair were seen on Gunung Ambang in the north. The true family affinity of this species is still up for debate; here classified among the Grassbirds, under the Handbook of the Birds of the World it is currently classified under the Babblers (*Timaliidae*), and on the IOC checklist listed under Bulbuls (*Pycnonotidae*).

**Chestnut-backed Bush-Warbler *Locustella castaneus*****SE**

Seen once along the Anaso Track (Lore Lindu, Central Sulawesi), and then extremely well at Gunung Ambang (North Sulawesi).

CISTICOLAS & ALLIES: *CISTICOLIDAE***Zitting Cisticola*****Cisticola juncidis***

Two were seen at Makassar Fishponds (South Sulawesi), also heard around Dumoga-Bone (North Sulawesi).

**Golden-headed Cisticola*****Cisticola exilis***

One very confiding bird was seen while searching for raptors in the Sedoa Valley (Central Sulawesi).

WHITE-EYES, YUHNAS & ALLIES: *ZOSTEROPIDAE***Streak-headed White-eye*****Lophozosterops squamiceps*****SE**

One was seen very well by Lake Taming, with others seen along the Anaso Track too (both Lore Lindu, Central Sulawesi); another was seen at Gunung Mahawu in the north.

\*Also known as **Streak-headed Dark-eye**.

**Mountain White-eye*****Zosterops montanus***

Regularly recorded in in the highlands of Sulawesi.

**Lemon-bellied White-eye*****Zosterops chloris***

Seen at Makassar Fishponds (South Sulawesi), in the Sedoa Valley, and around our guesthouse in Wuasa in Central Sulawesi.

\*Also known as **Yellow-bellied White-eye**.

Also occurs in Java, Bali and West Papua.

**Black-ringed White-eye*****Zosterops anomalus*****SE**

A pair was seen at Karaenta Nature Reserve on our first morning. \*This species is endemic to South Sulawesi.

**Black-crowned White-eye*****Zosterops atrifrons***

Recorded at Lore Lindu, Tangkoko and Gunung Ambang.

\*Also known as **Black-fronted White-eye**.

**Cream-throated White-eye*****Zosterops atriceps*****ME****EXT**

Heard regularly while on Halmahera, where a pair was seen on our first full day there.

GROUND BABBLERS & ALLIES: *PELLORNEIDAE***Sulawesi Babbler*****Pellorneum celebense*****SE**

The very first bird, and endemic, of the tour, at Karaenta (South Sulawesi); also seen at Gunung Ambang and Gunung Mahawu in North Sulawesi.

OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS: *MUSCICAPIDAE***Sulawesi Streaked/Gray-streaked Flycatcher*****Muscicapa sp.***

A bird was seen very high in the trees at Lake Taming in Lore Lindu, which did not stay long enough to identify to species.

**Matinan (Blue) Flycatcher** *Cyornis sanfordi***SE**

Two separate individuals were found on different areas of Gunung Ambang; currently the only accessible location for the species, which is only known from four localities in North Sulawesi.

**Blue-fronted (Blue) Flycatcher** *Cyornis hoevelli***SE**

Seen three or four times in Lore Lindu National Park (Central Sulawesi).

**Sulawesi Blue-Flycatcher** *Cyornis omissus***SE**

Seen twice near Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi); Sam also saw another at Gunung Mahawu in the north of the island.

\*This was formerly lumped within **Mangrove Flycatcher** *C. rufigastra*.

**Island Flycatcher** *Eumylas panayensis*

Seen fairly regularly in Lore Lindu, and another was seen at Gunung Mahawu.

\*Also known as **Island Verditer/Turquoise Flycatcher**.

**Great Shortwing** *Heinrichia calligyna***SE**

Seen, typically briefly, though very close, on three separate occasions at Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi).

**Rufous-throated Flycatcher** *Ficedula rufigula***SE**

One was seen briefly by Sam and Sonia at least, at Gunung Mahawu (North Sulawesi), which sadly did not stick around for the others to see.

**Little Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula westermanni*

Seen twice around Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi).

**Snowy-browed Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypertyra*

Seen a handful of times in Lore Lindu National Park (Central Sulawesi).

**Pied Bushchat** *Saxicola caprata*

A pair were seen in the Sedoa Valley, near Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi).

**THRUSHES & ALLIES: TURDIDAE****Rusty-backed Thrush** *Geokichla erythronata***SE**

Three birds were seen in a single morning at Tangkoko. Nominated by two people in their TOP FIVE BIRDS OF THE TOUR. \*Also known as **Red-backed Thrush**.

**Geomalia** *Zoothera heinrichi***SE**

Three different birds, including two showy juveniles, were seen on the Anaso Track, Lore Lindu; one of the birds lingered on the track until at least 2pm, when it was seen repeatedly during our picnic lunch closeby! A remarkable and exceptional showing for the species, which was incredibly approachable, and seen down to twenty feet! After such an exceptional showing, it was a must inclusion in the overall TOP FIVE BIRDS OF THE TOUR, where it came in third!

**Sulawesi Thrush** *Cataponera turdoides***SE**

A singing bird was seen very well on our first morning at Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi).

**STARLINGS: STURNIDAE****Metallic Starling** *Aplonis metallica***EXT**

Regular groups were seen on Halmahera.

**Asian Glossy Starling** *Aplonis panayensis*

Just a few birds were seen in Sulawesi, with one at Manado airport (North Sulawesi), another in Tangkoko, and also in Lore Lindu (C Sulawesi).

**Moluccan Starling** *Aplonis mysolensis***EXT**

Good numbers were seen on our two visits to the Weda highlands on Halmahera.



**Short-tailed Starling***Aplonis minor*

Seen regularly around Lake Tambing in Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi).

**Sulawesi (Crested) Myna***Basilornis celebensis***SE**

We enjoyed a good run on the species, with a small group found by Stuart at Karaenta (S Sulawesi), and others seen near Lore Lindu (C Sulawesi); and then finally good looks and numbers came along the Molibagu Road in Dumoga-Bone (N Sulawesi), where one single flock held 16 birds.

**Javan Myna***Acridotheres javanicus*

This introduced species was seen in the Sedoa Valley, near Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi). Sometimes also referred to as White-vented Myna.

**White-necked Myna***Streptocitta albigollis***SE**

One was seen near Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi); others were seen at Tangkoko and Dumoga-Bone (both N Sulawesi).

**Fiery-browed Myna***Enodes erythrophris***SE**

Seen regularly in Lore Lindu National Park (Central Sulawesi); another pair was seen at Gunung Ambang in the north.

**Finch-billed Myna***Scissirostrum dubium***SE**

Seen first around Lake Tambing in Lore Lindu, then later again on multiple occasions in Tangkoko and Dumoga-Bone.

\*Also known as Grosbeak Starling.

**FLOWERPECKERS: DICAETIDAE****Yellow-sided Flowerpecker***Dicaeum aureolimbatum***SE**

Recorded at multiple sights on Sulawesi, with especially good views had at the “nectar bird capital of the island”, Gunung Mahawu (North Sulawesi).

**Crimson-crowned Flowerpecker***Dicaeum nehrkorni***SE**

After brief views in Lore Lindu, we were pleased to have excellent looks on Gunung Mahawu (North Sulawesi).

**Halmahera Flowerpecker***Dicaeum schistaceiceps***ME EXT**

A male was seen at the new site of Bukit Lemba, and another was seen in the Weda highlands (both Halmahera).

**Gray-sided Flowerpecker***Dicaeum celebicum***SE**

Seen on around eight occasions on Sulawesi.

**SUNBIRDS & SPIDERHUNTERS: NECTARINIIDAE****Plain-throated Sunbird***Anthreptes malacensis*

Seen three times on Sulawesi; at Karaenta, Dumoga-Bone, and the Grand Luley Resort near Manado.

\*Also known as Brown-throated Sunbird.

**Black Sunbird***Leptocoma sericea*

Recorded regularly during the tour; both on Sulawesi and Halmahera.

**Olive-backed Sunbird***Cinnyris jugularis*

Recorded on many days of the tour, and seen on Sulawesi and Halmahera.

**Crimson Sunbird***Aethopyga siparaja*

Seen a couple of times in the Sedoa Valley, near Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi).

**WAGTAILS & PIPITS: MOTACILLIDAE****Eastern Yellow Wagtail***Motacilla tschutschensis***H**

Only heard at Gunung Ambang and at the Grand Luley Resort (near Manado).

**HYLOCITREA: HYLOCITREIDAE****Hylocitrea*****Hylocitrea bonensis*****SE**

A couple of juvenile birds were seen by Lake Tambing, with their identification confirmed when an adult came in to feed them. Two adults were also seen on the second ascent of the Anaso Track, (both Lore Lindu, Central Sulawesi).

\*Formerly known as **Olive-flanked Whistler**.

**SISKINS, CROSSBILLS & ALLIES: FRINGILLIDAE****Mountain Serin*****Serinus estherae***

High-flying flyovers were all we could get along the Anaso Track, Lore Lindu, which represents pretty typical views!

**OLD WORLD SPARROWS: PASSERIDAE****Eurasian Tree Sparrow*****Passer montanus***

Recorded on almost all days of the tour, both in Sulawesi and Halmahera.

**WAXBILLS & ALLIES: ESTRILDIDAE****Black-faced Munia*****Lonchura molucca***

Only seen the once; when around thirty birds were seen in a rice paddy along the journey to Kotamobagu (North Sulawesi).

**Scaly-breasted Munia*****Lonchura punctulata***

Seen twice, in the Sedoa Valley in Central Sulawesi, and another group were seen in rice paddies in North Sulawesi. Also known as **Nutmeg Mannikin**.

**Chestnut Munia*****Lonchura atricapilla***

Recorded about ten times on the tour in Sulawesi.

**Pale-headed Munia*****Lonchura pallida***

Seen on two occasions on the tour; by Makassar Fishponds (South Sulawesi), and in paddies near Palu, Central Sulawesi.

**Java Sparrow*****Lonchura oryzivora***

Half a dozen birds were seen in a rice paddy in North Sulawesi, en-route to Kotamobagu

**MAMMALS****MEGABATS: PTEROPODIDAE****Variable Flying-Fox*****Pteropus hypomelanus***

Some bats flying around one dawn on Halmahera appeared to be this species.

**TARSIERS: TARSIIDAE****Spectral Tarsier*****Tarsius spectrum*****SE**

A pair was seen roosting in a large fig tree at Tangkoko.

**OLD WORLD MONKEYS: CEROPITHECIDAE****Moor Macaque*****Macaca Maura*****SE**

Two were seen at Karaenta (South Sulawesi).

**Tonkean Macaque***Macaca tonkeana***SE**

One was seen by Tina, near Lore Lindu (Central Sulawesi).

**Celebes Crested Macaque***Macaca nigra***SE**

At least one large troop was seen at Tangkoko, where we soon found us literally walking among them.

\*Also known as **Sulawesi** or **Black Crested Macaque**.

**SQUIRRELS: SCIURIDAE****Whitish Dwarf Squirrel***Prosciurillus leucomus*

Recorded a number of times in Tangkoko (North Sulawesi).

**Sulawesi Dwarf Squirrel***Prosciurillus murinus*

Commonly encountered in Lore Lindu in particular.

**CUSCUSES, BRUSHTAIL POSSUMS & ALLIES: PHALANGERIDAE****Sulawesi Bear Cuscus***Ailurops ursinus*

Two different animals were seen in Tangkoko (North Sulawesi).



**Weda Bay** Halmahera