Philippines

Endangered Endemics

Visayan Islands Extension



Spotted Wood Kingfisher by Glen Valentine

Composed of more than 7,000 islands scattered across a vast expanse of tropical sea, the Philippines harbour one of the highest numbers of birds facing imminent extinction. Many of these critically endangered yet spectacular species survive only in rapidly shrinking fragments of habitat. Combined with the extension, we can expect to encounter around 180 Philippine endemic and near-endemic birds, along with many other striking but more widespread species.

Our Endangered Endemics tour explores the Philippines' three largest islands. On Luzon, we visit montane, foothill and lowland forest localities for specials such as Stripe-headed Rhabdornis, Rough-crested and Scale-feathered Malkoha, Rufous Coucal, Coleto, the sensational Yellow-breasted Fruit Dove, Flaming Sunbird and the recently described Chocolate Boobook, among many other superb endemics.

Mindanao supports some of the largest remaining tracts of lowland forest, where highlights include the secretive Wattled Broadbill, Azure-breasted Pitta, Mindanao Boobook, Rufous and Writhed Hornbills and the beautiful Philippine Trogon. The forested slopes of Mount Kitanglad offer the most reliable site for the magnificent Philippine Eagle, a giant raptor often regarded as one of the world's most sought-after birds. Here we will also search for another recently described endemic, the Bukidnon Woodcock, as well as Apo Myna, Stripe-breasted Rhabdornis, Red-eared Parrotfinch, Mindanao Racket-tail, Cinnamon Ibon and Giant Scops Owl.

On Palawan, white sandy beaches, extensive coral reefs and an underground river provide a spectacular backdrop for several key species. Highlights include Philippine Pitta, the stunning Blue Paradise Flycatcher, Spot-throated and Red-headed Flamebacks, Palawan Scops Owl, Palawan Frogmouth and Palawan Hornbill, among nearly 30 endemic species inhabiting the island.

Our extension to the remarkable Visayan Islands takes in Cebu, Bohol and Negros, where we target many highly sought-after and extremely range-restricted species such as Black and Visayan Shamas, Negros Scops Owl, White-throated Jungle Flycatcher, Flame-templed Babbler, White-winged Cuckooshrike, Black-belted Flowerpecker, Maroon-naped Sunbird, Yellow-breasted Tailorbird and Visayan Broadbill. This extension also provides opportunities for rare endemic mammals, including the remarkable Philippine Tarsier and Philippine Colugo, while the iconic Chocolate Hills scenery is simply unforgettable.

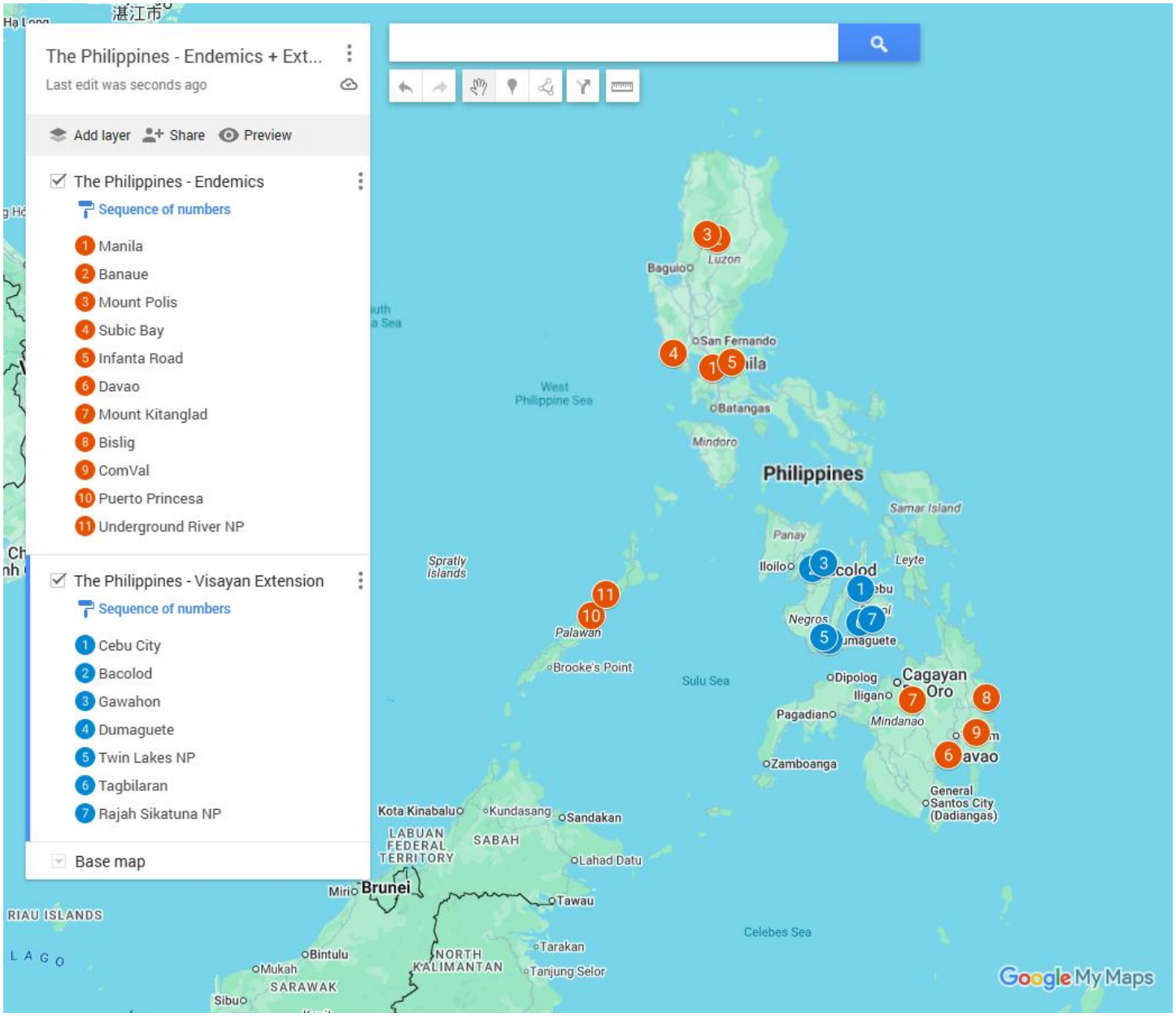
Itinerary & Map

Endangered Endemics

Day 1	**Arrival in Manila (Luzon)**
Day 2	**Manila to Banaue via La Mesa Park & Candaba Marsh**
Days 3 & 4	**Mount Polis**
Day 5	**Banaue to Subic Bay**
Day 6	**Subic Bay**
Day 7	**Subic Bay to Infanta**
Day 8	**Infanta Road**
Day 9	**Infanta to Manila via Palo Alto**
Day 10	**Manila, flight to Cagayan de Oro (Mindanao), transfer to Mount Kitanglad**
Days 11 & 12	**Mount Kitanglad**
Day 13	**Mount Kitanglad to Eden Park (Davao)**
Day 14	**Davao to Bislig via Panabo**
Days 15 to 17	**PICOP & Tinuy-an Falls**
Day 18	**Bislig to Davao via Compostela Valley; flight to Puerto Princesa (Palawan)**
Days 19 to 21	**Puerto Princesa, Irawan, Napsan Road & Narra**
Day 22	**Puerto Princesa, flight to Manila & final departure**

Visayan Islands Extension

Day 1	**Arrival in Cebu City, drive to Tabunan (Cebu)**
Day 2	**Tabunan to Cebu City, flight to Bacolod (Negros)**
Day 3	**Gawahon (North Negros Natural Park)**
Day 4	**Bacolod to Dumaguete via Mt. Canlaon**
Day 5	**Twin Lakes National Park**
Day 6	**Dumaguete, ferry to Tagbilaran (Bohol), drive to Rajah Sikatuna NP**
Day 7	**Rajah Sikatuna National Park and Chocolate Hills**
Day 8	**Rajah Sikatuna NP to Tagbilaran; flight to Manila & final departure**



Birding sites in detail

LUZON



Ashy Thrush by Glen Valentine

La Mesa. This small park near Manila has an area of forested trails where we will search for Ashy Thrush, Lowland White-eye, Hooded and Philippine Pittas, Philippine Magpie-Robin, Philippine Pied Fantail, Grey-backed Tailorbird, Philippine Pygmy Woodpecker, White-eared Brown Dove, and Elegant Tit, while chances also exist of encountering Slaty-legged Crake, the spectacular Spotted Wood Kingfisher, and Black-chinned Fruit Dove.

Candaba Marsh. We'll bird the inconspicuous Candaba Marsh for several waterbirds, that may include Philippine Duck, Philippine Swamphen, Barred and Buff-banded Rails, the secretive Plain Bush-hen, White-browed Crake, Watercock and up to three species of bittern, namely Yellow, Cinnamon and the scarce Black. Clamorous Reed and Middendorf's Grasshopper Warblers are also possible, and flocks of Chestnut Munia should also be evident.

Mount Polis. We'll be birding early to find the elusive and rarely seen Luzon Scops Owl before dawn. During our time in the area, we'll be birding along a trail that meanders through decent, reasonably intact forest along the lower slopes of the mountain, as well as along the quiet, tar road that crosses over the highest drivable point in the area, through degraded montane forest and dense secondary growth. The birding throughout the area can be excellent, despite the ongoing forest clearing. The songs of Green-backed Whistler and cryptic Long-tailed and Philippine Bush Warblers will likely alert us to the presence of these mountain endemics, and we'll be keeping a watchful eye for the scarce Mountain Shrike that sits up on exposed snags. We'll need to be quick, however, to see the rare Montane Racket-tail, which calls shrilly while flying high overhead, while roadside flowers could attract the glittering Metallic-winged Sunbird and, with a bit of luck, the localised Yellow-crowned Flowerpecker.



Yellow-crowned Flowerpecker by Glen Valentine

Mixed flocks often contain the active Blue-headed Fantail, Sulphur-billed Nuthatch, Negros Leaf (Philippine Mountain) Warbler, Turquoise Flycatcher and Chestnut-faced Babbler, and we will listen for the bubbling song of Citrine Canary-flycatcher that is



Scale-feathered Malkoha by Glen Valentine

sometimes in attendance, as well as the sparse population of White-cheeked Bullfinch and Red Crossbill. Around midday, we'll then drive further along the mountain road, where we can scan for the localised Luzon Water Redstart that is sometimes found perched on rocks between the swift river rapids.

From here we will also see the magnificent rice terraces of Banaue, extravagantly carved out of the mountains over two thousand years ago with only the aid of primitive hand tools. Unfortunately, some birds continue to become more difficult to find due to habitat loss and trapping, and we should count ourselves very fortunate if we are able to catch a glimpse of the rare White-browed Jungle Flycatcher or the striking Flame-breasted Fruit Dove.

Other noteworthy targets that are still gettable and will hopefully be found during our two full days on the mountain include White-bellied Woodpecker, (Northern) Buzzing Flowerpecker, the ultra-skulky Benguet Bush Warbler, the stunning Scale-feathered Malkoha, Philippine and Ridgetop Swiftlets, Elegant Tit, Brown-breasted Kingfisher and Fire-throated Flowerpecker. If we are fortunate, there might be a few over-wintering thrushes around that could include Brown-headed, White's and Eyebrowed, as well as the resident Luzon Island Thrush.

A small river below Banaue supports the stunning Indigo-banded Kingfisher, as well as Red-keeled Flowerpeckers in the flowering trees and Green-backed Tailorbird in the dense stream-side undergrowth and the distinctive, orange-bellied, *philippensis* subspecies of Blue Rock Thrush is also often encountered in this area.

Subic Bay. Subic Bay has tall tropical forests in which we'll search for a huge number of Philippines endemics, as well as several scarce Luzon endemics. At dawn, it is sometimes possible to see thousands of Large and Golden-crowned Flying Foxes returning to daytime roosts before we arrive at our birding site. Among other more widespread Philippine specialities, we will specifically be targeting the localised Green Racket-tail that often whizzes past through the canopy, the tangle-loving Rufous Coucal, Rough-crested Malkoha, Blackish Cuckooshrike, retiring White-browed Shama, Philippine Hawk-Eagle, Luzon Flameback and Northern Sooty Woodpecker. Slightly more widespread but no-less-desirable species we'll also be targeting during our time here include the impressive huge White-bellied Woodpecker, Philippine Serpent Eagle, Philippine Falconet, Philippine Honey Buzzard, Whiskered Treeswift, Purple Needletail, Blue-naped Parrot, Guaiabero (a type of endemic fig parrot), Philippine



Chocolate Boobook by David Hoddinott



Sulphur-billed Nuthatch by Glen Valentine

Hanging Parrot, Philippine Green Pigeon, Rufous-crowned Bee-eater, Bar-bellied Cuckooshrike, Pygmy Flowerpecker and Coleto. If we are very fortunate, we might catch a glimpse of the rare and seldom-seen Spotted Buttonquail crossing one of the tracks.

Night birding in this area may produce Chocolate and Luzon Boobooks, Great Eared and Philippine Nightjars and Philippine Scops Owl but we would have to be extremely lucky to come across the rare Philippine Eagle-Owl.

Infanta Road. This road is home to several spectacular Philippines endemics, many of which are challenging to find elsewhere. One of these is the highly sought-after but very rare and elusive Whiskered Pitta, a bird of forested hillslopes. If we are lucky, the birds may be calling, which would enhance our chances of seeing this stunning bird. Mixed flocks here often contain the active Blue-headed Fantail, Balicassiao, Bar-bellied Cuckooshrike, Sulphur-billed Nuthatch, Elegant Tit, Short-crested and Black-naped Monarchs, (Northern) Rufous Paradise Flycatcher, the recently described Calabarzon Babbler, Lemon-throated Leaf Warbler, Philippine and Yellow-wattled Bulbuls and Citrine Canary-flycatcher.

Many other highly sought-after species can also be found here, including the rare and spectacular (Northern) Rufous Hornbill, Coleto, the attractive Yellow-breasted, Cream-breasted and very rare and seldom-seen Flame-breasted Fruit Doves, the rare, shy and highly elusive Luzon Bleeding-heart, Philippine Cuckoo-Dove, Scale-feathered Malkoha, Rufous-crowned Bee-eater, Guaiabero, Brown-breasted Kingfisher, Amethyst Brown Dove, Stripe-headed and very rare Grand Rhabdornis, Flaming Sunbird and Bicolored Flowerpecker, while overhead we'll keep our eyes peeled for Philippine Serpent Eagle, Philippine Honey Buzzard, Purple Needletail and the scarce Philippine Hawk-Eagle.

Several recently constructed and perfectly situated hides/blinds/feeding stations have popped up in various homeowners' private gardens at the forest edge and these are producing a number of amazing species. We'll visit a few of these hides during our time in the area where highlights could include the gorgeous Spotted Wood Kingfisher, White-browed Shama, the previously mythical Bicol Ground Warbler, Olive-backed and Buzzing Flowerpeckers, Ashy Thrush, Philippine Pitta and the stunning Philippine Fairy-bluebird (now very rare or locally extinct elsewhere).



Philippine Fairy-bluebird by Glen Valentine



Yellow-breasted Fruit Dove by David Hoddinott

Nocturnal possibilities here include Luzon Boobook, Philippine Scops Owl, Philippine and Great Eared Nightjars, Philippine Frogmouth and a second chance for the tricky Luzon Scops Owl.

Palo Alto. This recently discovered site between Infanta and Manila is the only reliable and accessible locality in the country for the recently described and endemic Chirruping Nightjar. We'll stop in here on our way back to Manila for this species where we hope to find one or perhaps even a few of these localised nightjars during the day. The area is also quite good for Barred Rail, Plain Bush-hen, Scale-feathered Malkoha, (Northern) Indigo-banded Kingfisher, Brown-breasted Kingfisher, Pygmy Swiftlet and with exceptional luck, perhaps even the little-known Ashy-breasted Flycatcher.

MINDANAO

Mount Kitanglad. Local porters will meet us in Dalwangan, to assist and load our luggage onto packhorses for the ascent up the slopes of Mount Kitanglad. Our hike uphill through secondary cultivation and scrub takes us past long stretches of subsistence farming plots before finally arriving at our lodge. The ascent is not particularly difficult, and normally takes about three hours of steady walking at a manageable, unrushed pace.

The simple lodge here comprises a large open-air room where the toilets, shower room and kitchen are situated and where we'll eat our meals. Fifty meters away are numerous hiking-style tents with rain covers that are further covered by an additional, large tarpaulin. All mattresses and bedding will be provided. All our food and drinks will be carted up the mountain by horse and our cooks will do an excellent job in preparing our meals given the remoteness of the area.

We'll start birding in the vicinity of the lodge, an area that has proved consistently productive. As the surrounding forest comes alive with evening sounds, we will listen carefully for the recently discovered Bukidnon Woodcock that can sometimes be glimpsed roding through the forest gaps. There are also many other nocturnal possibilities here, including the fantastic Philippine Frogmouth, Great Eared and Philippine Nightjars and the incredible but often-difficult Giant Scops Owl.

We have plenty of time to explore the surrounding mountainsides and this is our best opportunity to find one of the greatest



Rufous-headed Tailorbird by Glen Valentine



Philippine Eagle by Forrest Rowland

and most highly prized birds on earth – the iconic Philippine Eagle. This unique and spectacular eagle specialises in feeding primarily on the arboreal Philippine Colugo, often referred to as a 'flying lemur'. It is a raptor of extremely low density so to maximise our chances for observation, we will need to scan very carefully at specific vantage points, a sometimes, tedious waiting process that may require great patience. However, our chance at success is excellent and the general birding in the forest surrounding these vantage points is usually very productive too.

Other raptors that regularly become air-borne during warm, clear mid to late mornings together with the Philippine Eagle include Rufous-bellied Eagle, the rare Pinsker's Hawk-Eagle, Philippine and Crested (Oriental) Honey Buzzards and Philippine Serpent Eagle.

During our investigations of the mountain, we utilise the many local trails in efforts to locate the more than two dozen montane endemics that occur on these slopes. On each day we will ascend the mountain along often-muddy but gradually ascending trails from the camp at 1,350m to the Philippine Eagle viewing area at 1600m. However, there will be an option for those who want to go higher to around 2000m in search of the higher-elevation specialist, Apo Sunbird. The other two high-elevation specialties here are Mindanao Heleia (often associating with mixed flocks) and the beautiful Apo Myna. Although these species are possible down to 1500m in elevation, they do become more reliable the higher one climbs. The forest is also in better condition higher up and any chance we might have of rarities such as the near-mythical Mindanao Serin, the inexplicably shy and elusive Bagobo Babbler that skulks across the forest floor like a rodent, the rare and declining Spotted Imperial Pigeon and the little-known Slaty-backed Jungle-Flycatcher would be in these more pristine, higher-elevation forests.



Apo Myna by Glen Valentine

In the secondary forest and forest edge habitat between the camp and the Philippine Eagle viewing area, we will be stopping frequently to hopefully find the striking Yellow-breasted Fruit Dove, McGregor's Cuckooshrike, the uncommon Stripe-breasted Rhabdornis, Rufous-headed Tailorbird, charismatic Black-and-cinnamon Fantail that normally accompany loose bird parties/mixed species flocks, Grey-hooded Sunbird, Amethyst Brown Dove, (Southern) Buzzing, Fire- throated and uncommon Olive-capped



Black-and-cinnamon Fantail by Glen Valentine

Flowerpeckers that moves around in altitude responding to fruiting vegetation, Cinnamon Ibon, the scarce and secretive Red-eared Parrotfinch, skulking Philippine Shortwing and the low-denisty White-cheeked Bullfinch, as well as migrants like Mugimaki Flycatcher and Eyebrowed Thrush.

Mindanao Racket-tail, often first heard screeching from afar, is still regularly seen flying overhead in the mornings and occasionally perched, and we will also keep our eyes skywards for the endemic Philippine Swiftlet.

The lower elevation forest that has now sadly been mostly cleared around the camp area still supports some good birds like the very rare and unobtrusive Hombron's Kingfisher, Striated Wren-Babbler, Bundok (Thicket) Flycatcher, Brown Tit-Babbler, Philippine Hawk-Cuckoo, Sunda Brush (Rusty-breasted) Cuckoo, Yellow-bellied Whistler, Grey-streaked Flycatcher, Mindanao Hornbill, Short-tailed Starling and Brown-breasted Kingfisher.

Davao. A pre-dawn walk near our lodge might produce Giant and Everett's Scops Owls and Philippine Frogmouth, before we stake out a nearby forested stream for Cryptic Flycatcher and Southern Silvery Kingfisher. Thereafter, we'll be driven up a steep and bumpy road for fifteen minutes to a site for the extremely localised and previously mythical Whiskered Flowerpecker. Other potential highlights this morning might include Orange-tufted and Naked-faced Spiderhunters, over-wintering Kamchatka Leaf Warbler, Crested Honey Buzzard, Coleto, Bicolored, Red-keeled and Orange-bellied Flowerpeckers, and if we are very fortunate, the distinctive, endemic, orange-bellied subspecies of Purple-throated Sunbird that is likely to be split in future as a Mindanao endemic.

Panabo coastal wetlands and mudflats. One of the world's rarest species has turned up here for several years in a row now between October and April and this is the critically endangered Chinese Crested Tern. We'll make a concerted effort to find this rarity but we would still require a hefty dose of luck since their occurrence here is still rather erratic, the area is vast and there are usually only one or two birds around each year. While searching for this mega species, we'll also likely encounter a wide range of over-wintering waders such as Bar-tailed Godwit, Terek Sandpiper, Greater and Siberian Sand Plovers, Pacific Golden Plover, Eurasian and Far Eastern Curlew and Red-necked Stint, while Chinese Egret is also often encountered. Other tern species we might find include Gull-billed, Little, Greater Crested and Roseate.



Rufous-lured Kingfisher by Glen Valentine



Azure-breasted (Steere's) Pitta by Glen Valentine

PICOP. This was an extensive logging concession that is now technically a protected area, controlled and managed by the Philippine government and the department of tourism and wildlife. However, most of the forest has already disappeared due to the logging exploits of the past and sadly, continues to disappear at an alarming rate due to the ongoing slash-and-burn agriculture and continued illegal logging that is taking place by the local inhabitants. Despite its dire situation and condition, PICOP is still surprisingly rich in birds and continues to support a huge number of excellent, endemic species. The area remains the only accessible site in the whole of the Philippines for several localised and scarce endemics and continues to be one of our main focal points of the entire trip.

Arriving before dawn, we will listen for the haunting calls of Chocolate and Mindanao Boobooks and try to track down an Everett's Scops Owl in the same area if not already encountered at Davao. Giant Scops Owl also occurs around PICOP but is rare and difficult to find, while Philippine Frogmouth is usually a lot easier to locate. Early morning is also a great time to scan for birds perching on top of snags over the forest, and here we have chances to find the rare Blue-crowned Racket-tail and the scarce Pink-bellied and very rare Spotted Imperial Pigeons. Following up on the calls of Black-chinned Fruit Dove should eventually produce views of this attractive species, while other forest interior denizens we hope to track down include the gorgeous Philippine Trogon, the reticent Black-faced Coucal, Amethyst and White-eared (Short-billed if split) Brown Doves, Yellowish and Yellow-wattled Bulbuls, the beautiful Rufous Paradise Flycatcher, Mindanao Blue Fantail, the dazzling Short-crested and very rare and local Celestial Monarchs, extremely furtive Little Slaty Flycatcher, Mindanao Pygmy and Rusty-crowned Babblers, Brown Tit-Babbler, the vocal Philippine Leaf Warbler, Rufous-fronted and striking Black-headed (White-browed) Tailorbirds, the unobtrusive and easily over-looked Philippine Jungle Flycatcher, the scarce and elusive Wattled Broadbill, shy and low-density Blue-capped (Hombron's) Kingfisher and the superb Philippine and Azure-breasted (Steere's) Pittas.



Philippine Trogon by David Hoddinott

The forest edge and man-made clearings are the best places to hopefully locate a few mixed species flocks to appear that could harbour the now-rare Philippine Leafbird, Black-bibbed Cicadabird, Stripe-headed Rhabdornis, Buff-spotted Flameback, Black-and-white Triller and Philippine Oriole.



Short-crested Monarch by Glen Valentine

Flowering and fruiting trees attract Red-keeled and Orange-bellied Flowerpecker, Naked-faced and Orange-tufted Spiderhunters, Metallic-winged, Handsome, Grey-throated and Purple-throated Sunbirds and Everett's White-eye, as well as Mindanao Hornbill and we also hope to track down the now-rare and declining Rufous and Writhed Hornbills that are often first heard by the loud whooshing of their wings or their honking, territorial calls that carry far across the valleys and hills.

Pinsker's Hawk-Eagle and Philippine Honey Buzzard occasionally soar overhead on thermals, while Philippine Spinetail and Purple Needletail are a more regular sight. It will likely take persistence to locate a Rufous-lored (Winchell's) Kingfisher in the dense forest mid-story; much easier will be scanning the small freshwater pools and forest streams for the outrageous Southern Silvery Kingfisher.

Although mammals are few and far between during this tour, we should come across Philippine Pygmy Squirrel and Mindanao Tree Squirrel during our time at PICOP. One evening at dusk, we will visit the flooded rice fields surrounding the Bisling Airport. These "wetlands" are usually surprisingly rich in waterbirds and often support Black, Cinnamon and Yellow Bitterns, Lesser Coucal, White-browed Crake, Watercock (even in breeding plumage!), Swinhoe's Snipe, Clamorous Reed and Middendorf's Grasshopper Warblers and Philippine and Black-backed Swamphens. The rare and elusive Slaty-breasted Rail and King Quail also occur here but are difficult to see from the roadside. Wandering Whistling and Philippine Ducks regularly make passing flybys from their feeding areas to their roosting sites, as do Pink-necked Green Pigeons and at dusk, we hope to lay eyes on an Eastern Grass Owl, hunting low over the flooded fields and small patches of taller, native grass and reeds.



Blue-crowned Racket-tail by Glen Valentine

Tinuy-an Falls. The small river and falls close to Bislig and surrounded by a decent area of lowland forest supports a number of key targets that are now tricky or impossible at PICOP. Along the river, below the falls, we'll scan for the unbelievably beautiful but tiny Southern Silvery Kingfisher, while the surrounding forest supports Black-chinned and Yellow-breasted Fruit Doves, Amethyst and White-eared (Short-billed) Brown



Lina's Sunbird by Glen Valentine

Doves, Buff-spotted Flameback, Philippine Trogon, Blue-crowned Racket-tail, Coleto, Philippine Drongo-Cuckoo and Short-tailed Drongo, among many other possibilities. Staying out after dusk could very well yield Philippine Nightjar and Mindanao Boobook.

ComVal. We'll spend a morning birding this lower-montane forest locality in the Compostela Valley that has recently become famous for supporting reliable pairs of Lina's Sunbird. Although this stunning and extremely localised sunbird will be our primary target, we also hope to find flocks of Mindanao Heleia, the scarce Flame-crowned Flowerpecker and Mindanao Island Thrush and if we are extremely lucky, perhaps even the very rare and localised Mindanao Brown Dove. Mixed species flocks support a similar selection of very fine high elevation Mindanao endemics and this will offer additional viewing possibilities of species such as

PALAWAN

Puerto Princesa and Irawan. Oriental (Rufous-backed if split) Dwarf Kingfisher can often be heard dashing from one perch to the next as we search for the attractive Blue-headed Racket-tail, Chestnut-breasted Malkoha, Stork-billed and Ruddy Kingfishers, White-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-throated Leafbird that might be found in a fruiting tree along with the scarce and unobtrusive Sulphur-bellied Bulbul, the vociferous and surprisingly showy White-vented Shama, Ashy-headed Babbler creeping through the undergrowth, the dazzling Blue Paradise Flycatcher, Palawan Crow, Palawan Drongo, Palawan Bulbul, flocks of Common Hill Myna, Ventriloquial Oriole, Black-chinned Fruit Dove, Bar-bellied Cuckooshrike, Philippine and Western Hooded Pittas, Palawan Blue Flycatcher, Pale Spiderhunter and Fiery Minivet. As the day warms up, we'll be glancing skywards for soaring Crested Serpent Eagle, Changeable Hawk-Eagle, Crested Goshawk and Crested Honey Buzzard, as well as Brown-backed Needletails.



Palawan Flycatcher by Glen Valentine

We'll also target two bamboo forest specialists: the shy and unobtrusive Melodious Babbler and the furtive Palawan Flycatcher, both of which can be difficult to nail down in the dense tangled undergrowth of this tropical forest.



Palawan Fairy-bluebird by Glen Valentine

Tall mangrove habitat in the area is likely to produce Copper-throated Sunbird, Collared Kingfisher, Pied Triller, Ashy-fronted Bulbul and Palawan Sunbird.

Night birding in the area can be productive, and during at least one night here we will venture out in search of Palawan Frogmouth, Palawan Scops Owl, the distinctive, endemic subspecies of Spotted Wood Owl and the more widespread Large-tailed Nightjar. On a different night, we'll head out five minutes by boat to the tiny Cana Island situated just offshore in Puerto Princesa Bay. Here, we hope to lay eyes on the small-island-specialist Mantanani Scops Owl.

Napsan Road. Heart-warmingly, Palawan is still mostly blanketed in forest. The entire length of the Napsan Road, now gaining in popularity as one of the best areas to see many of Palawan's trickier endemics, meanders its way through good-quality, intact foothill forest. Birding along this road is excellent and it certainly appears to be the core area for endemic gems like Palawan Hornbill, Spot-throated and Red-headed Flamebacks, Palawan Fairy-bluebird, Lovely Sunbird, the vibrant Palawan Flowerpecker, Palawan Tit, Blue-headed Racket-tail and the secretive Falcated Wren-Babbler. Other slightly more widespread but noteworthy species that we may very well also encounter here include the gigantic Great Slaty Woodpecker, Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo and Thick-billed (Striped) Flowerpecker.

A recently erected hide/blind/feeding station in the area has been producing a number of mouth-watering specialties over the past few years. We'll visit this hide on one morning where we hope to lay eyes on the once-mythical Palawan Peacock-Pheasant, as well as close views and photographic opportunities of Grey-throated (Palawan) Bulbul, Western Hooded Pitta, Ashy-headed Babbler, White-vented Shama and Palawan Blue Flycatcher alongside North Palawan Tree Squirrels and Palawan Treeshrews that regular frequent the feeding area.



Blue Paradise Flycatcher by Glen Valentine

Narra. This coastal area to the south of Puerto Princessa will our focal point one afternoon. Here, we'll patiently wait and watch for the critically endangered Red-vented Cockatoo to fly over and hopefully perch up on one of the surrounding



Red-vented Cockatoos by Glen Valentine

coconut palms before continuing on its path to the offshore island of Rasa. This is sadly one of the last remaining breeding localities for this now-rare and extremely localised species. Although the island is strictly off limits other than to local conservation authorities, we stand an excellent chance of seeing the cockatoos from the beach on the neighbouring mainland.

CEBU

Tabunan. We'll spend an afternoon and morning in the degraded forested hillsides at Tabunan. The first of our targets here to show itself is usually the endemic Black Shama, which more than makes up for its lack of colour with its incredible song. Thereafter, the beautiful Mangrove (Philippine if split) Blue Flycatcher will hopefully appear at the edge of dense bamboo clumps. Less common and much more elusive (especially in recent years) is the tricky Streak-breasted Bulbul that inhabits the canopy and mid-story tangles and we'd be very fortunate to even hear, let alone see this species. We'll scan through the numerous Red-keeled Flowerpeckers for Cebu Flowerpecker, but with no verified sightings in the past fifteen years – it is now very likely extinct, or at least from this site. We are also likely to encounter the outrageous Magnificent Sunbird that frequents the same flowers as preferred by the flowerpeckers, as well as local races of



Visayan Broadbill by David Hoddinott



Luzon (Visayan) Boobook by Glen Valentine

both Elegant Tit and White-vented Whistler. Other interesting species we'll be on the lookout for include Grey-rumped and Pygmy Swiftlets, Philippine Hawk-Cuckoo, Lowland White-eye, the highly attractive and extremely localised red-faced subspecies of Coppersmith Barbet and Tawny Grassbird. A nocturnal excursion will hopefully produce the endemic Cebu Boobook.

NEGROS

Gawahon. An early start will see us driving into the cultivated foothills to the north-east of Bacolod to the edge of the last remaining forested mountains in northern Negros. Gawahon supports some of the last remaining populations of rare endemics such as the scarce and elusive White-throated Jungle Flycatcher, the gorgeous but tricky Flame-templed Babbler, the shy, stream-loving (Southern) Indigo-banded Kingfisher, Lemon-throated Leaf Warbler and the uncommon White-winged Cuckooshrike and these fabulous endemics will be our focus today. Other noteworthy species include Visayan Bulbul, Black-belted (Visayan) Flowerpecker, Negros Leaf Warbler, Visayan Fantail, White-vented Whistler, and the Visayan subspecies of Spotted Wood Kingfisher. Mixed flocks in the area will harbour many of the species mentioned above but should also include Turquoise Flycatcher, Sulphur-billed Nuthatch and Elegant Tit. Degraded Forest patches, thickets and agricultural lands around our lunch spot could yield Mangrove (Philippine) Blue Flycatcher, Philippine Magpie-Robin, Chestnut, White-bellied and Scaly-breasted Munias and Barred Rail.

Mount Canlaon. Another early start will see us driving south-east of Bacolod to the lower slopes of Mount Canlaon. Although basketball is the official national sport of the Philippines, cockfighting would have to rank as the most popular rural pastime for men who can afford to raise them. As we ascend, we'll see fields of small wooden tents with roosters crowing atop almost every pinnacle!



Flame-templed Babbler by David Hoddinott

Our main targets this morning will be the secretive but vociferous Visayan Shama and the stunning, tangle-loving Flame-templed Babbler, should we not have seen it at Gawahon and our chances of seeing both specialties is excellent. Although the birding here is slow and challenging, we are likely to encounter a few other interesting and eye-catching species this morning such



Maroon-naped Sunbird by Glen Valentine

as White-vented Whistler, Black-belted Flowerpecker, Visayan Fantail, Maroon-naped Sunbird and if we are extremely lucky, maybe the very rare Yellow-faced Flameback or Dimorphic Dwarf Kingfisher.

Balinsasayao Twin Lakes National Park. Arriving at the picturesque, forest-lined crater lakes in this wonderful protected area just after dawn will afford us excellent chances of seeing endemic forest denizens such as Visayan Hornbill and Blue-crowned Racket-tail sitting up on exposed perches or flying overhead to their feeding sites.

A lookout deck at the park's restaurant is an especially good place to watch for feeding flowerpeckers and sunbirds and also for viewing mixed flocks moving through the surrounding forest and here we hope to encounter Orange-bellied, Bicolored, Red-keeled and Black-belted Flowerpeckers, dazzling Magnificent and Maroon-naped Sunbirds, the scarce White-winged and Visayan Cuckooshrikes and Balicassiao.

Short, forest trails down to the lake-edge will give us access to habitat for Amethyst (Grey-breasted if split) Brown Dove, the vocal but shy Philippine Hawk-Cuckoo, the retiring Philippine (Visayan if split) Shortwing, Spotted Wood Kingfisher and Visayan Tailorbird.

We'll also embark on a very pleasant and leisurely paddle-boat trip on the larger of the two crater lakes which will be our best chance of seeing Philippine Spinetail as they often skim low over the water, Pink-bellied Imperial Pigeon, the brilliant Yellow-breasted Fruit Dove and Philippine Oriole. There's even a chance here, although very slim, for the rare and elusive Visayan Rhabdornis and equally rarely seen Yellow-faced Flameback. We'll also certainly keep our eyes peeled overhead for raptors such as Philippine and Crested Honey Buzzards, Osprey, Crested Goshawk and Philippine Serpent Eagle. An evening of owling may produce the much-desired Negros Scops Owl and Luzon (Visayan if split) Boobook.



Philippine Colugo (Flying Lemur) by Glen Valentine

BOHOL

Rajah Sikatuna National Park. Our time in the sizable tract of lush, tropical forest of Rajah Sikatuna National Park will be spent birding along the side roads and narrow trails that meander through the forest. Although challenging to locate at



Striated Wren-Babbler by Glen Valentine

other sites in the Philippines, the calls of Azure-breasted Pitta are fairly common here, and we have excellent chances of obtaining good views of this colourful creature, as well as the uncommon Rufous-lored Kingfisher. In addition, we will be concentrating on locating the striking Yellow-breasted Tailorbird that skulks in the dense undergrowth, the sneaky Rufous-fronted Tailorbird, Metallic-winged (ex-Bohol) Sunbird, Visayan Babbler, Visayan Blue Fantail, Philippine Jungle Flycatcher and the terrestrial Striated Wren-Babbler. Samar Hornbills are normally seen here with some regularity, as is Philippine Trogon, the dazzling Philippine Fairy-bluebird, Black-faced Coucal, Buff-spotted Flameback, the brilliant Southern Silvery Kingfisher, Purple-throated and Handsome Sunbirds, Philippine Leaf Warbler, Philippine Oriole, Yellow-bellied Whistler and (Short-tailed if split) Balicassiao. With a hefty dose of fortune, perhaps the rare Black-bibbed Cicadabird, the fantastic Visayan Broadbill or the inexplicably rare Mindanao Bleeding-heart will put in an appearance.

Of additional interest, there are a large number of frogs and lizards present in the reserve. These include the flying lizards of Asia (of the genus Draco), which have wing-like membranes connected to long expandable ribs on each side, enabling them to glide without ever coming to the ground.

Open patches surrounding the forest at dusk can be productive for Everett's Scops Owl and Philippine Frogmouth, as well as mammals that may include Philippine Tarsier, large numbers of Golden-crowned Flying Fox and the incredible, gliding Philippine Colugo (Flying Lemur) - a large arboreal mammal that has generous amounts of skin membrane between its forelimbs and tail helping it to glide extreme distances from tree to tree, and one of only two representatives of a very bizarre mammal family.



Philippine Tarsier by Glen Valentine

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		This is an intense, demanding & highly focused birding tour targeting the many endemic species of the Philippines, with the aim of seeing as many as possible within the available timeframe. A very good level of fitness, stamina & general health is essential. This tour is not suitable for dedicated photographers, inexperienced birders, or anyone with mobility or significant health concerns. Expect many very long days with early starts & late finishes, driven by the high number of nocturnal species & some lengthy transfers between sites.
Birding Ease		Bird densities can be low, but birding can also be highly rewarding & productive at many sites, and we consistently record a large proportion of the available endemics. Several species are rare, shy & unobtrusive forest birds, often requiring multiple attempts, patience & persistence. Many Philippine endemics occur at low densities due to habitat loss & trapping.
Accommodation		Mostly very good throughout. However, a few nights at Mount Kitanglad are basic, spent in small hiking-style tents with shared facilities & no electricity. Further details are provided later in the itinerary.
Walking / Trails		Generally easy walking along roads & tracks, with some moderate forest hikes. Longer, more demanding hikes on the lower slopes of Mt. Kitanglad are mostly optional. Trails can be muddy & slippery after rain. Expect long days on your feet.
Vehicles / Roads		Highly variable. Most roads are in good condition & sealed, but there are also long, winding mountain roads & some rough, bumpy sections. Vehicle types vary between large bus, minibus, 4x4 & "jeepney" (a modified, low-roofed, open-air 4x4 unique to the Philippines). Some long drives are unavoidable.
Photography		Variable but often worthwhile, though frequently challenging. Low light, potential rain, dense forest habitat & high canopy, combined with skittish & low-density species, can make photography difficult. However, the addition of new hides, blinds & feeding stations in recent years has significantly improved opportunities.
Annoyances		Malaria, dengue & other biting insects are present. Conditions can be very hot & humid in the lowlands. Rain is possible at any time, even during the "dry" season.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 22 on the Endangered Endemics tour;
- All meals from dinner on day 1 to lunch on day 8 on the Visayan Islands Extension;
- Bottled drinking water, tea and coffee at meals;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services;
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights (except as stated above);
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions & activities;
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- This tour requires a very good level of fitness & stamina. Participants must be in good general health. Much of the forest birding is done on foot and may involve walking or standing for several hours at a time.
- This is an intensive, target-driven birding tour, aiming to secure good views of as many species as possible, the majority of which are endemic to the Philippines.
- Expect frequent early morning starts & late finishes, driven by the high number of nocturnal species, as well as travel time between accommodations & suitable forest habitat.
- Some days involve long drives, occasionally along winding mountain roads

- Accommodation is generally good, with stays in hotels or guesthouses (typically the best available in remote areas). However, conditions at Mt. Kitanglad are basic. Here, accommodation is in small hiking-style tents (one per participant), with shared facilities & no electricity. Thin but adequate mattresses, pillows & towels are provided. Tents are fitted with rain covers & flyscreens and are sheltered under a large tarpaulin. The camp crew prepare warm, hearty meals, and provide warm water for bucket showers. Toilets are western-style but require manual flushing. A communal dining area is used for meals & daily checklists. Overall, conditions are comfortable given the remoteness, though light sleepers should bring earplugs due to close quarters.
- Much of the tour takes place in remote areas with limited access to medical facilities.
- Conditions are typically hot & humid, particularly in the lowlands. Early starts help avoid the heat, while higher elevation sites such as Mt. Polis & Mt. Kitanglad can be cool to cold, especially in the mornings.
- Access to certain sites can change from year to year, and some locations may occasionally be inaccessible.
- Significant time is spent in vehicles due to the distances involved. For the comfort of the group, please pack conservatively: a maximum of 20kg (44lb) for checked luggage & ideally 8kg (18lb) for hand luggage.

Arrival and Departure Details

Day 1 of the Endangered Endemics tour is set aside as an arrival day; you are thus free to arrive at any time. The tour will conclude in the mid-morning of day 22 at Manila International Airport.

The Visayan Islands Extension will depart in the late afternoon of day 1 from Manila International Airport and conclude here in the mid-afternoon of day 8.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Manila International Airport (IATA: MNL) is the main port of entry and departure for international flights to The Philippines.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.