The Philippines

Endangered Endemics

Visayan Islands Extension



Spotted Wood Kingfisher by Glen Valentine

Composed of 7,107 islands strewn across a vast stretch of tropical sea, the Philippines occupy the unenviable position of harbouring the most birds facing imminent extinction. Many of these critically endangered yet spectacular species survive only in increasingly shrinking remnants of habitat. During our combined main tour (Endangered Endemics) and extension, we can expect to encounter around 180 Philippine endemic and near-endemic birds and many other spectacular but slightly 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 recently discovered Chocolate Boobook among many other fabulous endemics. Mindanao hosts the largest tracts of remaining 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 are the most reliable site for the magnificent Philippine Eagle, this giant raptor is often rated as the world's single-most desirable bird! Here we will also search for another recently discovered 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 make a spectacular backdrop for several specials we are likely to find. Highlights include the mound-building Philippine Megapode, Philippine Pitta, the incredibly beautiful Blue Paradise Flycatcher, Spot-throated and Red-headed Flamebacks, Palawan Scops Owl, Palawan Frogmouth and Palawan Hornbill among the close-to 30 endemic species inhabiting the island.

Our extension to the amazing Visayan Islands takes in the smaller islands of Cebu, Bohol, and Negros where we target many highly sought-after and extremely range-restricted species like Black and Visayan Shamas, Negros Scops Owl, White-throated Jungle Flycatcher, Flame-templed and Negros Striped Babblers, White-winged Cuckooshrike, the rare Yellow-faced Flameback, Black-belted Flowerpecker, Bohol Sunbird, Yellow-breasted Tailorbird and Visayan Broadbill. This extension also provides chances for rare, endemic mammals such as the strange Philippine Tarsier and Philippine Colugo (Flying Lemur), while the Chocolate Hills scenery is simply spellbinding!

Itinerary & Map

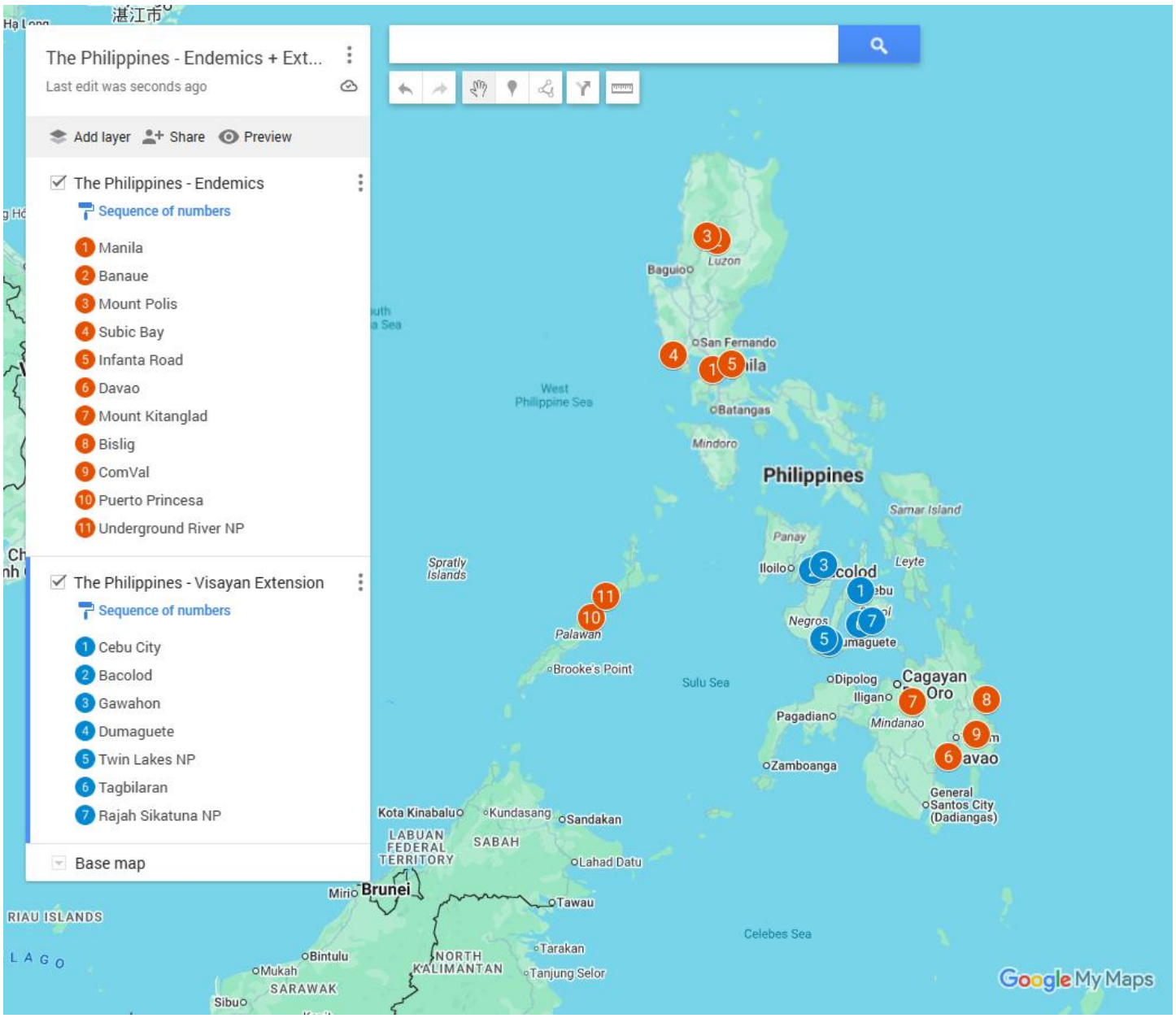
Endangered Endemics

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**
Day 10	**Manila, flight to Davao (Mindanao), transfer to Mount Kitanglad**
Days 11 & 12	**Mount Kitanglad**
Day 13	**Mount Kitanglad to Davao**
Day 14	**Davao to Bislig**
Days 15 to 17	**PICOP**
Day 18	**Bislig to Davao via ComVal; flight to Puerto Princesa (Palawan)**
Days 19 & 20	**Puerto Princesa, Irawan & Napsan Road**
Day 21	**Puerto Princesa, flight to Manila & final departure**

Visayan Islands Extension

Day 1	**Arrival in Manila, flight to Cebu City, drive to Tabunan (Cebu)**
Day 2	**Tabunan to Cebu City, flight to Bacolod (Negros)**
Day 3	**Gawahon**

Day 4	**Bacolod to Dumaguete via Mt. Kanlaon**
Day 5	**Twin Lakes National Park**
Day 6	**Dumaguete, ferry to Tagbilaran (Bohol), drive to Rajah Sikatuna NP**
Day 7	**Rajah Sikatuna National Park**
Day 8	**Rajah Sikatuna NP to Tagbilaran, flight to Manila & final departure**



Birding sites in detail

LUZON



Ashy Thrush by David Hoddinott

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 Luzon 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 Luzon Sunbird and, with a bit of luck, the localised Yellow-crowned Flowerpecker.

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 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.



Yellow-crowned Flowerpecker by Glen Valentine



Scale-feathered Malkoha by Glen Valentine

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-breasted (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 Island Thrush.

A small river below Banaue supports the stunning (Northern) Indigo-banded Kingfisher, as well as Red-keeled Flowerpeckers in the flowering trees and Trilling (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 Philippine, 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 and Northern Sooty Woodpecker. Slightly more widespread but no-less-desirable species we'll also be targeting during our time here include the impressive Luzon Flameback, huge White-bellied Woodpecker, Philippine Hawk-Eagle, Philippine Serpent Eagle, Philippine Falconet, Philippine Honey Buzzard, Whiskered Treeswift, Purple Needletail, Blue-naped Parrot, Guaiabero (a type of endemic fig parrot), Philippine 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.



Chocolate Boobook by David Hoddinott



Philippine Eagle by Forrest Rowland

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

Sadly, the scarce, arboreal White-lored Oriole and the seldom-seen White-fronted Tit are mostly restricted to an area of now-inaccessible forest nearby with no sightings of either of these species from the area since 2020. However, we will keep our eyes and ears open for these rarities and we might just get lucky!

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, the secretive and recently split Bicol Ground Warbler, Balicassiao, Coleto, Bar-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Olive-backed Flowerpecker, Philippine Fairy-bluebird (now very rare or locally extinct elsewhere), Sulphur-billed Nuthatch, Elegant Tit and Citrine Canary-flycatcher.

Many other highly sought-after species can be found here, including the spectacular Spotted Wood Kingfisher, Barred Rail, Plain Bush-hen, Luzon and the rare (Northern) Rufous Hornbills, attractive Flame-breasted, Yellow-breasted and Cream-bellied Fruit Doves, Philippine Cuckoo-Dove, Scale-feathered Malkoha, Rufous-crowned Bee-eater, Brown-breasted Kingfisher, Amethyst Brown Dove, Stripe-headed Rhabdornis, White-browed Shama, Lemon-throated Leaf Warbler, Philippine and Yellow-wattled Bulbuls, Flaming Sunbird and Bicolored Flowerpecker, while overhead we will watch for Philippine Hawk-Eagle, Philippine Serpent Eagle, Guaiabero, Purple Needletail, Ameline Swiftlet and Blue-crowned Racket-tail and we'll also keep an ear out for the mournful calls of the rare Luzon Bleeding-heart.



Rufous-crowned Bee-eater by Glen Valentine

Nocturnal possibilities here include Luzon Boobook, Philippine Scops Owl, Philippine Nightjar, Philippine Frogmouth and with much luck, the rare Philippine Eagle-Owl.

MINDANAO



Yellow-breasted Fruit Dove by David Hoddinott

Mount Kitanglad. Local porters will meet us in Damitan, 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 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.



Rufous-headed Tailorbird by Glen Valentine

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



Sulphur-billed Nuthatch by Glen Valentine

endemics that occur on these slopes. On each day we will ascend the mountain along often-muddy but gradually acsending 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 White-eye (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, retiring Bagobo Babbler that skulks across the forest floor like a rodent, the decling Spotted Imperial Pigeon and Slaty-backed Jungle-Flycatcher would be in these more pristine, higher-elevation forests.

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-breasted (throated) and uncommon Olive-capped 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, Rusty-breasted (Sunda Brush) Cuckoo, Yellow-bellied Whistler, Grey-streaked Flycatcher, Mindanao Hornbill, Short-tailed Starling and Brown-breasted Kingfisher.



Philippine Pygmy Woodpecker by Glen Valentine

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,



Azure-breasted Pitta by Glen Valentine

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, Oriental Honey Buzzard, Brahminy Kite and Philippine Spine-tailed Swift, as well as 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.

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 Tailorbirds, the unobtrusive and easily over-looked Philippine Jungle Flycatcher, the scarce and elusive Wattled Broadbill, shy and low-density Hombron's (Blue-capped) Kingfisher and the superb Philippine and Azure-breasted (Steere's) Pittas.



Philippine Trogon by David Hoddinott



Short-crested Monarch by Glen Valentine

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.

Flowering and fruiting trees attract Olive-backed and Orange-bellied Flowerpeckers, Naked-faced and Orange-tufted Spiderhunters, Handsome, Metallic-winged, 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 vallies and hills.

Pinsker's Hawk-Eagle and Philippine Honey Buzzard occasionally soar overhead on thermals, while Philippine Spine-tailed Swift and Purple Needletail are a more regular sight. It will likely take persistence to locate a Winchell's (Rufous-lored) 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, Cinammon 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.



Brown Tit-Babbler by Glen Valentine

ComVal. We'll spend a morning birding this lower-montane forest locality in the Compostela Valley that has recently become famous



Lina's Sunbird by Glen Valentine

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 White-eye (Black-faced Dark-eye), White-cheeked Bullfinch, Flame-crowned Flowerpecker and Island Thrush and if we are extremely lucky, perhaps even a Mindanao Brown Dove or Bagobo Babbler.

Panabo 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 and 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 Lesser Sand Plovers, Pacific Golden Plover, Eurasian Curlew and Red-necked Stint, while Chinese Egrets are also often encountered. Other tern species we might find include Gull-billed, Little, Greater Crested and Roseate.

PALAWAN

St. Paul's National Park. Declared a World Heritage Site, the park is beautifully located between high limestone cliffs and white sandy beaches covered by a patch of dense pristine forest. Huge Palawan Monitor Lizards, sometimes over six feet in length, scavenge across the trails, agile Long-tailed Macaques scamper playfully, and within the forest, Philippine Megapodes scratch leaf litter onto their gigantic mound nests. Scanning for shorebirds and egrets, might turn up the rare Chinese Egret, as well as Pacific Reef Heron.

Ground-dwelling birds are particularly well represented within the reserve and besides Philippine Megapode, we hope to see the secretive Philippine and Hooded Pittas, the latter of which is pleasantly common in the reserve. The striking Palawan Peacock-Pheasant, undoubtedly one of the most beautiful pheasants in the world, is present in the national park but very difficult to see these days. Another major target here is the Palawan Blue Flycatcher, a beautiful, endemic songster.



Palawan Flycatcher by Glen Valentine

The major attraction for more general tourists is the famous Underground River that flows for miles until emptying into the sea. As an optional excursion, participants are welcome to board small canoes with battery-powered spotlights that enter from the turquoise lagoon into the dark depths of the cave. Believed to be one of the longest navigable underground rivers in the world, this is a magical experience, and we have the chance



Palawan Fairy-bluebird by Glen Valentine

to observe an unbelievable selection of pristine cave formations, as well as Germain's (Edible-nest) and Ameline (Palawan if split) Swiftlets.

Puerto Princesa, Irawan & the Rehab Reserve. 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, Black-throated Oriole, Black-chinned Fruit Dove, Bar-bellied Cuckooshrike 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.

Tall mangrove habitat in the area is likely to produce Copper-throated Sunbird, Collared Kingfisher, Pied Triller, Ashy-fronted Bulbul and the distinctive, endemic, orange-breasted subspecies of Olive-backed Sunbird, while scenic forested stretches may reveal a variety of interesting species such as the endemic Palawan Hornbill, Lovely Sunbird, Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo, Pale (Palawan) Spiderhunter, the vibrant Palawan Flowerpecker, Palawan Tit and a chance for the resident Oriental Hobby that has nested on nearby cliff ledges. We'll also stake out a reliable area for the critically endangered, Red-vented Cockatoo that is now almost entirely restricted to Palawan and small offshore islands.

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.

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 venture out 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.



Blue Paradise Flycatcher by Glen Valentine



Red-vented Cockatoos by Glen Valentine

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, Striped Flowerpecker, Blue-headed Racket-tail and the secretive Falcated Wren-Babbler.

CEBU

Tabunan. This morning we will hike up the degraded hillside at Tabunan to reach one of only a handful of dismally small scraps of forest remaining on the island. 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 is the tricky Streak-breasted Bulbul that inhabits the canopy and mid-story tangles, but with persistence, we should find a few birds.



Visayan Broadbill by David Hoddinott

We'll scan through the numerous Red-keeled Flowerpeckers for Cebu Flowerpecker, but with no recent sightings in the past decade – it is now very likely extinct. We are also likely to encounter the



Luzon (Visayan) Boobook by Glen Valentine

outrageous Magnificent Sunbird that frequents the same flowers as preferred by the flowerpeckers, and local races of both Elegant Tit and White-vented Whistler. A nocturnal excursion will hopefully produce the endemic Cebu Bobook.

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 Kanlaon. Another early start will see us driving south-east of Bacolod to the lower slopes of Mount Kanlaon. 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!

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 might also encounter other noteworthy species this morning such as White-vented Whistler, Black-belted Flowerpecker, Visayan Fantail, Maroon-naped Sunbird and if we are extremely lucky, maybe a Yellow-faced Flameback.



Flame-templed Babbler by David Hoddinott

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



Striated Wren-Babbler by Glen Valentine

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 Bar-bellied (Visayan if split) Cuckooshrikes and (White-bellied if split) 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, Philippine (Visayan) Tailorbird and rarities like White-throated Jungle Flycatcher and the seldom-seen and easily over-looked Ashy-breasted Flycatcher.

We'll also embark on a very pleasnt and leisurely paddle-boat trip on the larger of the two crater lakes which will be our best chance of seeing Philippine Spine-tailed Swifts as they often skim low over the water, the very rare Yellow-faced Flameback, Pink-bellied Imperial Pigeon, the brilliant Yellow-breasted Fruit Dove and Philippine Oriole. There's even a chance here, although slim, for the rare and elusive Visayan Rhabdornis and we'll certainly keep our eyes peeled overhead for raptors such as Philippine and Crested Honey Buzzard, the rare Pinsker's Hawk-Eagle, Osprey, Crested Goshawk and Philippine Serpent Eagle.

Dumaguete area/EDC. The surrounding hills hold the endemic Negros Striped Babbler, a higher altitude species that very few birders have seen. We hope to be able to drive right to the altitude and area for this previously mythical species and will patiently stake out a small area where a pair regularly moves through while feeding, often together with other mixed flock species like Warbling White-eye, Sulphur-billed Nuthatch, Elegant Tit, Philippine Tailorbird, Lemon-throated Leaf Warbler, Balicassiao, Visayan Fantail and Visayan Bulbul.

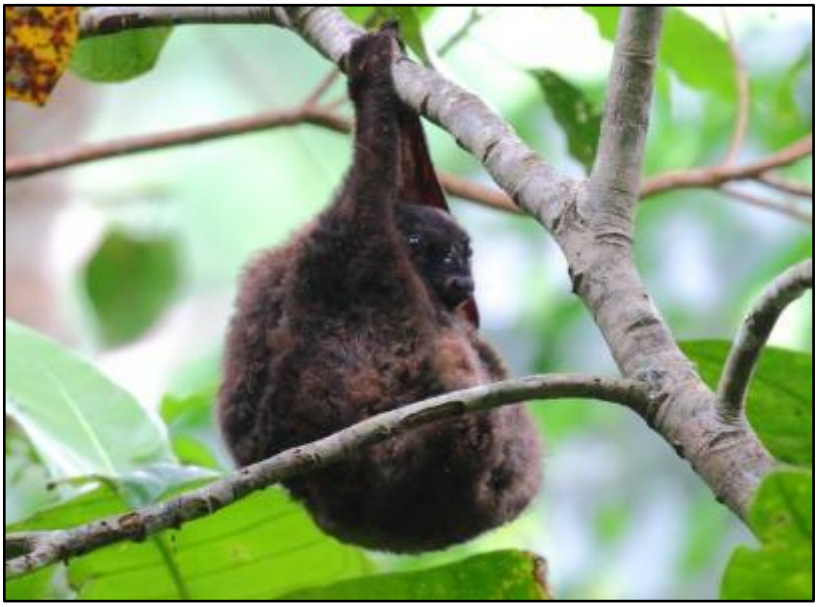
An evening of owling may produce the much-desired Negros Scops Owl and Luzon (Visayan if split) Boobook.



Maroon-naped Sunbird by Glen Valentine

BOHOL

Bohol & Cebu Island Ferries. During the ferry crossings, we will keep a lookout for Bulwer's Petrel, Common, Black-naped and Aleutian Terns, all of which are rare and irregular but certainly possible. Flocks of Red-necked Phalarope are common here for a few weeks



Philippine Colugo (Flying Lemur) by Glen Valentine

while on passage back north to their breeding grounds and a few cetaceans might also appear and could include Spinner and Bottle-nosed Dolphins and False Killer Whale.

Rajah Sikatuna National Park. We will be birding along the narrow trails accessing a sizable tract of lush tropical forest. Although challenging to locate at 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 Winchell's (Rufous-lored) Kingfisher. In addition, we will be concentrating on locating the striking Yellow-breasted Tailorbird that skulks in the dense undergrowth, Bohol Sunbird, Visayan Babbler, Visayan Blue Fantail, Rufous-tailed 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, Handsome and Purple-throated Sunbirds, Philippine Leaf Warbler, Bicolored Flowerpecker, Philippine Oriole, Yellow-bellied Whistler, Rufous-fronted Tailorbird and (Short-tailed if split) Balicassiao and with a hefty dose of fortune, perhaps the rare Black-bibbed Cicadabird, the fantastic Visayan Broadbill or the inexplicably rare Mindanao Bleeding-heart.

Interestingly, 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 Philippine 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 Frogmouth by David Hoddinott

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		This is an intense to demanding tour. You should have a VERY GOOD level of fitness and stamina & be in good health. Not suitable for dedicated or avid photographers; inexperienced birders; or anyone with mobility or health challenges.
Birding Ease		Bird density is low, mostly within the forest interior. Focused tour searching for difficult, endemic species. Requires much patience & persistence.
Accommodation		Reasonable to good, a few nights very basic at Mount Kitanglad with shared facilities and no hot water or electricity.
Walking / Trails		Mostly moderate, but some tough, longer hikes and climbs are necessary. Can be muddy and slippery after rain. Long days on our feet.
Vehicles / Roads		Travel by minibus and 4x4 where necessary. Road conditions are reasonable. Some very long drives.
Photography		Worthwhile at best, typical rain forest conditions of variable light and rain, many species are skittish and shy.
Annoyances		Malaria and other biting insects are present. Environment can be very hot & humid.

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 21 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 DOES require a VERY GOOD level of fitness and stamina. Participants should also be in good general health. Much of the forest birding will be done on foot and may require walking or standing for several hours at a time.
- This Philippines tour is designed to be an intensive birding experience and we will attempt to get good views of as many bird species as possible.
- There are many early morning starts.
- Some days involve long drives.
- Due to the number of nightbirds, nocturnal birding is a must, but most sessions are optional.
- Lodgings are generally good; we will stay either in hotels or guesthouses. Be aware that at times we may experience maintenance problems in these facilities that are beyond our control. In the smaller towns, while we always opt for the best available accommodation, this is often basic and well below the standard of what you have come to expect from the developed world.
- We will spend most of this tour in remote locations well away from medical facilities.
- Most areas will be hot and humid. We will thus make good use of the early mornings and will have a lot of very early starts to avoid, as far as possible, birding in the middle of the day.
- In the rainforest areas the humidity will be high and potentially very uncomfortable.
- Access to some sites changes from year to year, and we may not be permitted to visit some locations.
- Much of our time is spent in vehicles, as we do have to cover long distances to reach the best birding areas. For the comfort of your fellow travellers, do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kg (44lb) for check in luggage and 8kg (+-18lb) for hand luggage.
- Typhoon Rai, known in the Philippines as Super Typhoon Odette struck the country in December 2021 causing significant damage to the island of Palawan especially. Bird density and diversity have suffered greatly and is expected to take a number of years to return to former levels.

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 21 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.