Indonesia

Banda Sea Cruise

Kai Island Extension



Slaty-backed Thrush by Dubi Shapiro

This very special island-hopping cruise through the seldom-birded, far eastern Indonesian islands has been specially designed to maximise our chances of locating the regions unique endemic birds. During part of the next 3 weeks, we will cruise our way across some of our planet's least explored seas and the myriad of jewel-like islands, including Tanahjampea, Kalao, Kalaotoa, Pantar, Alor, Wetar, Leti, Damar, Babar and the Tanimbars that host an amazing number of endemics and many little-known birds. This will be expedition cruising at its very best! Except for a handful of recent observations, very little is known about the avifauna of these rarely visited islands. The main tour, followed by an extension to the seldom explored Kai Islands, bodes well in finding most of the endemics and future endemic species too. We can expect to encounter a wide array of Asia's least known and most exciting and sought-after species!

The world's sixth largest nation, Indonesia supports around 12% of Earth's tropical forests and a vast storehouse of biological wonders and ethnographic curiosities. Of special interest to us, Indonesia hosts a total of some 1,700 species of birds including around 400 currently recognised endemics (but as many as 600 endemics if

taking the new Birds of the Indonesian Archipelago into account!); at least 130 of which are considered globally threatened. The eastern islands are among the least explored of all with many having been visited by less than a handful of western ornithologists and it is these islands and their remarkable birds that will be the focus of our attention.

The extensive Indonesian archipelago that comprises the slightly enigmatic nation of the Republic of Indonesia encompasses some 17,000+ islands that girdle the equator for more than 6,000km. Like a string of emeralds adrift in seas adorned with myriads of turquoise coral reefs and blessed with dazzling beaches and deep, mysterious forests host to untold avian gems. Our journey will take us from Flores all the way across the south-eastern edge of the mighty Banda Sea to the fabulous Tanimbar Islands, still host to vast areas of primordial forest. Cruising east our first island stop will be the little explored and seldom visited Tanahjampea where we seek out Tanahjampea Monarch and Tanahjampea Blue Flycatcher – both only rediscovered in 1993 after their initial collection in 1927! The islands of Kalao and Kalaotoa, largely unbirded since 1895, will definitely excite our spirit of adventure too. Next up is the island of Pantar and very poorly known Alor where several specials await us such as Olive-headed Lorikeet, Timor Stubtail, Alor Myzomela, newly rediscovered Javan Bush Warbler and an undescribed Macropygia which is currently subsumed within the Little Cuckoo-Dove complex. Further genetic studies should give rise to a new species in the future – Eucalyptus Cuckoo-Dove! We then spend a day at sea, which has great potential for large numbers of seabirds and cetaceans before arriving at the large and quite mountainous island of Wetar. Lowly populated and still covered in large areas of lovely forest we will be in seventh heaven uncovering this island's offerings. Further east we will pop into the island of Leti for one of Wallacea's least known specialties - Grey (Kisar) Friarbird. Our next island is Damar, home to the endemic and at one stage mythical Damar Flycatcher, which was only rediscovered in 2001 after its initial discovery in the 19th century. Lastly, we will call in at the island of Babar before our final stop at Yamdena on the Tanimbar Islands where we spend the remainder of our time enjoying a further array of endemics.

Just some of the birds we hope to encounter include: Tanimbar Megapode, Bulwer's Petrel, Wetar Ground Dove, Wallace's Fruit Dove, Elegant and Timor Imperial Pigeons, Flores Green Pigeon, Tanimbar Corella, Little (Pied) Bronze Cuckoo, Flores Sea Cuckoo-Dove, Cinnamon-banded Kingfisher, Blue-streaked Lory, Iris Lorikeet, Jonquil Parrot, Yellow-crested Cockatoo, Tanimbar Boobook, Moluccan Scops Owl, Elegant Pitta, Black-necklaced Honeyeater, Cinnamon-tailed Fantail, Black-bibbed Monarch, Damar and Timor Blue Flycatchers, Wetar Figbird, Wetar Oriole, Timor Stubtail and Slaty-backed, Orange-banded and Fawn-breasted Thrushes. Add to this a wealth of other localised endemics, a rich variety of seabirds, cetaceans, reef fishes and some wonderful butterflies and you have all the ingredients of an extremely exciting and memorable adventure.

Our short extension to the tiny Kai archipelago takes us to Kai Kecil and Kai Besar - the two largest islands, each hosting its very own suite of endemics. A short trip to Haruku Island should produce Moluccan and Dusky Megapodes, before we head to Kai Cecil and Kai Besar where we'll search for the endemic Kai Monarch, Golden-bellied (Kai Kecil) White-eye, the elusive Kai Cicadabird, keyensis subspecies of Rufous-sided Gerygone, endemic assimilis subspecies of Northern Fantail (Kai Fantail) and the ubiquitous and noisy Spangled Drongo (Kai Spangled Drongo), Kai Coucal, Pearl-bellied (Kai Besar) White-eye and localised Cinnamon-chested Flycatcher.

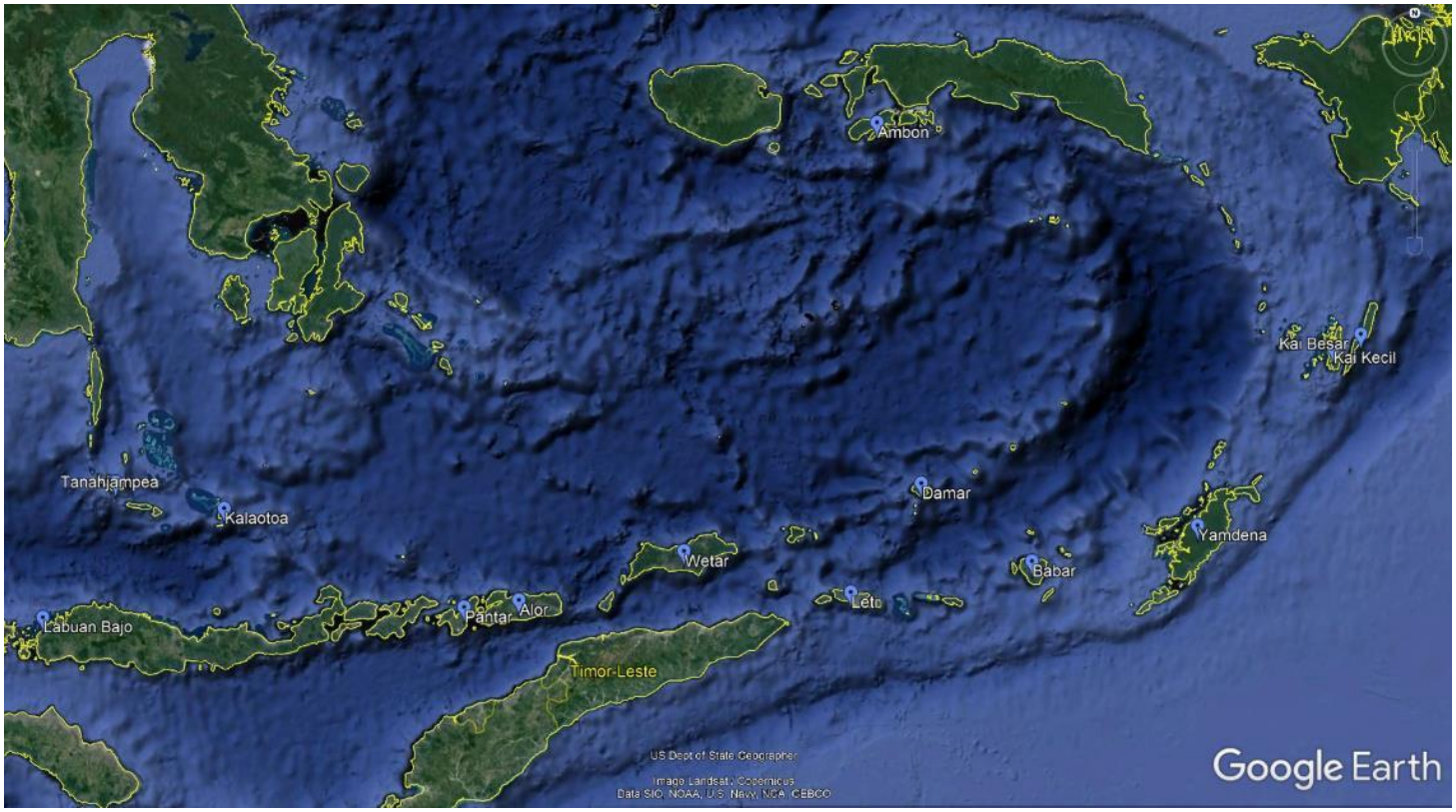
Itinerary & Map

Banda Sea

Day 1	Arrival in Bali, flight to Labuan Bajo & sail to Tanahjampea
Day 2	Tanahjampea to Kalao, afternoon sail to Kalaotoa
Day 3	Kalaotoa, afternoon sail to Pantar
Day 4	At sea towards Pantar
Day 5	Pantar, evening sail to Alor
Day 6	Alor, evening sail to Wetar
Day 7	Arrive in Wetar
Day 8	Wetar
Day 9	Wetar, evening sail to Leti
Day 10	Leti, evening sail to Damar
Day 11	Arrive in Damar
Day 12	Damar, evening sail to Babar
Day 13	Babar, evening sail to Yamdena
Day 14	Arrival in Yamdena, Tanimbar Islands
Days 15 to 17	Exploring the Tanimbar Islands
Day 18	Flight from Yamdena to Ambon and depart

Kai Island Extension

Day 1	Arrival in Ambon, afternoon on Haruku Island
Day 2	Flight from Ambon to Kai Cecil
Days 3 & 4	Kai Cecil & Kai Besar
Day 5	Kai Cecil & depart



Birding sites in detail



Island Monarch by David Bishop

Bali to Tanahjampea. We board our very comfortable private vessel – the Lady Denok, our home for almost 2 weeks, and set sail north into the open Flores Sea, our first destination being the island of Tanahjampea. Watching for pelagics from deck will be the order of the afternoon, and we may find the likes of Sooty, Bridled, Black-naped and even Aleutian Terns, Brown and Red-footed Boobies, Brown Noddy, Greater and Lesser Frigatebirds, groups of Red-necked Phalarope, Streaked and possibly even Heinroth's Shearwaters, Parasitic, Long-tailed and Pomarine Jaegers and Bulwer's Petrel. Cetaceans out in the open seas could include Blue and Sperm Whales as well as Indo-pacific Bottlenose and Risso's Dolphins – a fantastic way to kick start our grand tour.

Tanahjampea. After sailing through the night, we wake before dawn and make our way to the small twenty-kilometre-long island of Tanahjampea. Situated between Sulawesi and Flores, this island is home to the two island endemics; Tanahjampea Blue Flycatcher and Tanahjampea Monarch which will be our primary focus here, as well as many other mouth-watering specials and subspecies that could soon be elevated to species status. Tanahjampea Monarch was first collected in 1927 and then only seen next in 1993. After finding our main targets, we will focus on the many endemic subspecies that look likely to be elevated to full species status. These will hopefully include the seldom-seen Flores Sea Cuckoo-Dove, recently split in 2016 from the Bar-

necked Cuckoo-Dove complex, the fantastic looking *virginalis* Elegant Pitta – endemic to the Flores Sea Islands, *teysmanni* Olive-backed Sunbird that should be split into 'Sahul' Sunbird, *everetti* subspecies of Rusty-breasted Whistler that should become 'Tenggara' Whistler and *celebenisis* Arafura Fantail that should be split into 'Supertramp' Fantail. The more open scrub, cashew plantations and coconut palms should hold Lemon-bellied White-eye, Broad-billed Flycatcher, Island Monarch, our first of many Pink-headed and Elegant Green Pigeons as well as Black-naped Fruit Dove.



Elegant Pitta by David Hoddinott

Kalao. We will spend the rest of the day on the nearby small island of Kalao, largely unbirded since 1895! Here we will be searching for a very distinct taxon of Mangrove Blue Flycatcher which was only collected in 1985 and could be elevated to new species status and will be known as Tanahjampea Jungle Flycatcher. Also, the subspecies of Tanahjampea Blue Flycatcher on this island is important to find as it could be split into Kalao Blue Flycatcher. We have another great chance in finding *virginalis* Elegant Pitta hopping around the mossy undergrowth as well as the rare Flores Sea Cuckoo-Dove again. Orange-footed Scrubfowl are particularly relaxed on this island and Malaysian Plover should also been seen scurrying along the shoreline.

Kalaotoa. This sparsely inhabited island holds only around ten households, and because of this, Flores Sea Cuckoo-Doves are particularly common due to the lack of hunting. A different race of Arafura Fantail is to be found on this island – *mimosae*; definitely worth searching for! The *senex* subspecies of Rufous-sided Gerygone is endemic to Kalaotoa and Malu Islands and therefore becomes another important target. The *everetti* subspecies of Rusty-breasted Whistler is again possible on Kalaotoa. Interestingly, an endemic race of Sunset Lorikeet was collected from this island, but unfortunately seems to have become extinct. After a great morning's birding, we will make our way back to our liveaboard for lunch and we may even fit in some celebratory snorkelling before sailing further east to Pantar.



Olive-headed Lorikeet by David Hoddinott

Kalaotoa to Pantar. Most of today will be spent on the open ocean and keeping a lookout over the expanse of blue water should be rewarding. We will have further opportunities for a variety of pelagic species and cetaceans including Red-tailed Tropicbird, Tahiti Petrel, Heinroths's Shearwater, Blue and Sperm Whales and Green Turtle.

Pantar. The large island of Pantar, with its myriad of mangroves, coconut plantations, scrubland and eucalypt forests, will be explored today in the hopes of finding some new targets. This is a great island to catch up with some more widespread species and if one hasn't travelled to the Lesser Sundas before, many new additions will be the order of the day. These could

include Indonesian Honeyeater, vibrant Olive-headed Lorikeet, the smart-looking Black-fronted Flowerpecker, Broad-billed Flycatcher, startling Flame-breasted Sunbird and Barred Dove which interestingly was introduced into Hawaii in 1922.



Flame-breasted Sunbird by Dubi Shapiro

We will also focus on finding the *concinna* subspecies of Elegant Pitta, different in plumage and voice from the *virginalis* subspecies on the previous islands. Another interesting subspecies of Wallacean Cuckooshrike will be searched for, in the hopes that a future split will give rise to Alor Cuckooshrike. Hopefully, with all our targets under our belt, waiting until after sunset will see us searching for our next goal – the very recently split Alor Boobook. Genetics and vocals pointed to a new species from Australian Boobook and after hopefully finding a responsive pair, we will make our way back to the Lady Denok and enjoy a fantastic dinner as we begin sailing to Alor.

Alor. Today we will begin our birding at the coast before heading up into the hills in search of some very special birds. Here in hillsides of rather unappealing grassland, we will search for the recently rediscovered Javan Bush Warbler (sometimes re-characterised as Timor or Sunda Grasshopper Warbler). Typical of this group of birds, this species will undoubtedly try our patience, but with a bit of effort, we should hopefully be able to find a suitable spot in which to see a responsive individual. As important is a yet to be described *Macropygia* which is currently subsumed within the Little Cuckoo-Dove complex. Further genetic studies will almost certainly reveal a new species in the future, which has tentatively been named – Eucalyptus Cuckoo-Dove!

Alor perfectly illustrates the benefits of being able to explore these little-known islands with our own specially chartered ship. This poorly studied island is rather hot and dry and seemingly unrewarding; however, recent surveys here have revealed that Alor supports quite a rich suite of birds, many of which will be new to us on this trip. Thus, we can venture onto the island in the cool of the day, return to the ship when it gets too hot, enjoy a relaxed lunch, and some welcome midday relaxation before heading out again in the afternoon and evening. We may even shift the ship's anchorage to access a completely different site in the afternoon.



Chestnut-backed Thrush by Dubi Shapiro

Several new species to this trip occur on Alor, including Black-naped Fruit Dove, Green Imperial Pigeon, Rusty-breasted (Sunda Brush) Cuckoo (split from Brush Cuckoo), Asian Koel, Drab Swiftlet (recently split from Glossy Swiftlet), Edible-nest Swiftlet, Tree Martin, the impressive Stork-billed Kingfisher, Blue-tailed and Rainbow Bee-eaters, the endemic Alor Myzomela, Golden-bellied Gerygone, Black-naped Oriole, and once again the very distinctive Alor population of Wallacean Cuckooshrike, which it shares only with the island of Lomblen (likely to be split as Alor Cuckooshrike), gorgeous Black-naped Monarch, Tenggara Paradise Flycatcher (split from Blyth's

Paradise Flycatcher, Mountain White-eye which was recently subsumed with Japanese White-eye to become Warbling White-eye, Sunda Bush Warbler, Common Hill Myna, the neat Lesser Sundas endemic Chestnut-backed Thrush and Black-fronted Flowerpecker.

As we have both the morning and afternoon sessions on this island, we will also search for several rare and elusive species such as Red-legged Crake, Flores Green Pigeon, Flores Hawk-Eagle and Sunda Thrush; however, our chances of finding any one of these four species is rather slim. Sadly, our chances of finding one the Alor's most charismatic species, the Yellow-crested Cockatoo that also occurs on several other surrounding Indonesian islands such as Komodo Island, has become increasingly unlikely but we will certainly keep a look out for this now-rare and endangered species. This evening we could once again, seek out the endemic and very recently split Alor Boobook, if we did not manage to find it the previous night on Pantar.



Cinnamon-banded Kingfisher by Dubi Shapiro

Wetar. Wetar is a somewhat obscure and very poorly known island located 50km off the north-east coast of Timor. Although ornithologists have known for more than a century that Wetar supports at least three single island endemics - in addition to 15 endemics that it shares with Timor, or the Timor Group, it remains one of the most biologically poorly studied islands in Wallacea. During the 20th century, only John Elbert collected on the island, and he also appears to be the only biologist to venture into the interior. However, Elbert's collections have never been fully documented, although he wrote a lengthy and discursive narrative of his expedition (Elbert 1911). David Bishop visited Wetar in 1989 and discovered that the island was still relatively sparsely populated, and that extensive areas of good forest and woodland persist along with healthy populations of birds. A handful of recent observations here appear to confirm that such a happy situation continues.



Banded Fruit Dove by David Hoddinott

We will set out before dawn to access a lovely river valley which will lead us into the interior. With no trail to follow, we should be prepared for wading (in parts) along a shallow river as it navigates through a forest-lined gorge. The forest is superb and alive with birds and hopefully we will arrive in time to listen in wonder to the dawn chorus. Early morning activity can be instant and incredibly rewarding, if not downright exciting, but we do need to be alert. This lovely island supports some special birds, not least of which is the Wetar Ground Dove. Once thought to be on the verge of extinction, we now know that it is at least locally common on this island. Other species we may encounter include impressive numbers of pigeons and doves: Pink-headed and Timor Imperial Pigeons, Black Cuckoo-Dove, Banded (Black-backed) Fruit Dove, Timor Cuckoo-Dove, Pacific Emerald Dove, Barred Dove and Metallic Pigeon.



Tanimbar Blue Flycatcher by Dubi Shapiro

As we have now cruised sufficiently close to the large island of Timor, we should start to encounter several new species, in addition to endemics and near endemics, such as Brown Goshawk, Australian Hobby, Red-backed Buttonquail, White-breasted Waterhen, Marigold, Olive-headed and endemic *wetterensis* subspecies of Iris Lorikeets, the lovely Jonquil Parrot which is also an endemic *wetterensis* subspecies, Indonesian and Scaly-breasted (Banda) Honeyeaters, endemic Wetar Myzomela, the very striking-looking Black-necklaced Honeyeater, Plain (Timor) Gerygone, endemic Wetar Oriole, Wetar Figbird, Yellow-throated Whistler (likely to be split as Tenggara Whistler), Fawn-breasted Whistler, Wallacean Cuckooshrike, White-shouldered (Lesueur's) Triller, Northern Fantail (likely to be split as Timor Fantail), Arafura Fantail (sometimes split as Supertramp Fantail), Spangled Drongo (likely to be split as Timor Spangled Drongo), Broad-billed Flycatcher, Island and Spectacled Monarchs (sometimes split as Wallacean Monarch), Large-billed Crow, the diminutive Timor Stubtail, Zitting Cisticola, Short-tailed Starling, Orange-sided Thrush, Timor Blue Flycatcher (Timor Warbling-flycatcher), Lesser Shortwing, Little Pied Flycatcher, Thick-billed Flowerpecker (likely to be split as Tenggara Flowerpecker), Blue-cheeked (Red-chested) Flowerpecker, the gorgeous Flame-breasted Sunbird, Tricolored Parrotfinch and Zebra Finch.

In the evening we could stay until after dark to search for Moluccan Scops Owl (the endemic *tempestatis* race likely to be split as Wetar Scops Owl) and Large-tailed Nightjar (the race here likely to be split as Timor Nightjar due to distinctive vocalizations). Surprisingly, there is no species of Ninox Boobook yet known from Wetar.

Leti. With a bit of luck, we should arrive off the island of Leti before the heat of the day kicks in. Here we will be searching primarily for the poorly known Grey or Kisar Friarbird, one of Indonesia's least known birds. Only known from just three rather obscure islands: Leti, Moa and Kisar, this taxon was formerly treated as a subspecies of the biogeographically disjunct Little Friarbird. Other species we may encounter here include Spotted Kestrel, the silver-crowned subspecies of Rose-crowned Fruit Dove, Olive-headed Lorikeet, Wallacean Cuckooshrike, Rufous-sided Gerygone, the gorgeous Sunda Zebra Finch (this disjunct population recently split from Australian Zebra Finch) and Northern Fantail (likely to be split as Banda Sea Fantail).



Zebra Finch by David Hoddinott

Damar. Our visit to Damar will surely be one of our most eagerly anticipated stops of the entire cruise. The great collector, Heinrich Kuhn, who visited the island during 1899, painted an enchanting image of Damar. Nevertheless, it remained almost unexplored, and ornithologically, not at all during the 20th century. In 2001, the intrepid Colin Trainer finally made it there, and rediscovered a little-

known species. Known only from Kuhn's type collection of nine specimens, the Damar Flycatcher is found nowhere else on earth. Originally placed in its own genus, *Dammeria*, it is now placed in *Ficedula*. Hopefully, we will get to enjoy the opportunity of seeing this distinctive species.



Orange-banded Thrush by Dubi Shapiro

Babar. We will make an early landing on Babar and get in some birding at dawn. We will immediately seek out some suitable habitat for several great birds which reside here, including Little Bronze Cuckoo, more chances for the handsome Cinnamon-banded Kingfisher, Banda Myzomela, Cinnamon-tailed Fantail (vocally distinct from the Tanimbar population and thus possibly an undescribed species), the gorgeous, Orange-banded Thrush, Wallacean Whistler and Tricolored Parrotfinch - which can be quite conspicuous here. However, our primary focus will be to locate the poorly known but very distinctive 'Babar' Whistler - currently lumped by the IOC as Yellow-throated Whistler (*sharpie* subspecies) but split by BIA. With a bit of luck, we may find some migrant shorebirds too. In the evening, we will go in search of the aptly named endemic *cinnamomina* subspecies of Australian Boobook before we sail to Yamdena.

Babar to Yamdena. This will be a full day at sea, and it will be fascinating to see what we can turn up. These waters of the far south-east of Indonesia are virtually uncharted territory for birders (actually, for most forms of Biology), thus it is with eager anticipation that we look forward to this section of the cruise. We should have an excellent chance of encountering Streaked and Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, Brown Booby, Sooty, Bridled, Black-naped, Roseate, Greater Crested and Lesser Crested Terns, Parasitic and Pomarine Jaegers, Common Noddy, Lesser Frigatebird and rafts of wintering Red-necked Phalaropes, while other less likely possibilities include Tahiti and Bulwer's Petrels, Matsudaira's Storm Petrel, Masked, Red-footed and Abbott's Boobies, Great and Christmas Frigatebirds and White-tailed and Red-tailed Tropicbirds. Hopefully, we will also encounter a few different kinds of cetacean that are known from or thought to occur in these waters with the most likely options being Short-beaked Common and Indo-Pacific Bottle-nosed Dolphins and Short-finned Pilot Whale.



Five-color Munia by Dubi Shapiro

Yamdena. Excitingly, some of our birding will be entirely exploratory, as several of the islands that we hope to visit have likely never been visited by a biologist. Our first planned port of call will be a tiny collection of even smaller islets located off the north coast of Yamdena – far and away the largest of the Tanimbar Islands. Here, on such isolated specs, we hope to find the increasingly elusive Tanimbar Megapode, as well as Great-billed and Pacific Reef Herons, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Beach Stone-curlew, possibly the little-known and recently split Violet-hooded Starling (from Metallic), Island Whistler and Island Monarch.

From a vehicle track that bisects the entire eastern seaboard of Yamdena Island, and a variety of

associated tracks, we will explore a wide range of habitats. The Tanimbar Islands form the easternmost group of the Lesser Sundas (Nusa Tenggara) and, despite their political designation; they are not zoo-geographically part of the Moluccas. This island group supports at least 16 species of birds found nowhere else on the planet, in addition to a good number of other regional endemics.



Tanimbar Monarch by Dubi Shapiro

We have time to seek out the many Tanimbar specialties such as Tanimbar Megapode – now quite difficult on the main island, Tanimbar Cuckoo-Dove (split from Bar-necked), Wallace's and Rose-crowned Fruit-Doves (the latter a subspecies that lacks a rose crown on these islands), the lovely Little (Pied) Bronze Cuckoo, Blue-streaked Lory, Tanimbar Corella (or Cockatoo), the ubiquitous Scaly-breasted (Banda) Honeyeater, the attractive Banda Myzomela, Tanimbar Friarbird, the extraordinarily similar Tanimbar Oriole, White-browed (Tanimbar) Triller, the rare Kai Cicadabird, Cinnamon-tailed and Long-tailed (Charming) Fantails, Spangled Drongo (likely split as Tanimbar Spangled Drongo), Tanimbar Monarch and Black-bibbed (Banda Sea) Monarchs, Tanimbar Flycatcher (recently split from Rufous-chested), Golden-bellied (Tanimbar) Flyrobin, Rufous-sided (Banda Sea) Gerygone, the secretive Tanimbar Bush Warbler, the elusive Fawn-breasted and Slaty-backed Thrushes and Tanimbar Starling.

Other range-restricted species we'll be looking for include Black-faced and Five-coloured Munias, Tricolored Parrotfinch, the diminutive Barred Dove, Elegant and Pink-headed Imperial Pigeons, Ashy-bellied White-eye, Yellow-throated (Moluccan) and the smart-looking Wallacean Whistlers, Wallacean Cuckooshrike, Arafura Fantail (sometimes split as Supertramp Fantail), the stunning Cinnamon-banded Kingfisher, Great-billed Parrot and the sumptuous Elegant Pitta.

More widespread species we're likely to encounter while searching for the above-mentioned specialties include the tiny *fulgidum* subspecies of Mistletoebird (likely to be split as Salvadori's Flowerpecker), Scaly-breasted Munia, Brown Quail, Pale-vented Bush-hen, Osprey, Pacific Baza, Rufous-bellied Eagle (here at the extreme eastern edge of its range), Bonelli's Eagle, Short-toed Snake Eagle, Brahminy Kite, Variable Goshawk, Metallic Pigeon, Pacific Emerald Dove, Brush Cuckoo, the raucous sounding Channel-billed Cuckoo, Pacific Koel, Lesser Coucal, Pacific Swift, Glossy and Uniform Swiftlets, Azure and Collared Kingfishers, Oriental Dollarbird, Eclectus and Red-cheeked Parrots, Tawny Grassbird, Broad-billed and Shining Flycatchers, Torresian Crow and Golden-headed Cisticola.



Banda Myzomela by Dubi Shapiro

It is worth noting that at this time of the year, large numbers of Palearctic migrants, in particular, birds of prey have moved south to winter in the Indonesian archipelago. However, so few observers have birded

Wallacea at this time of the year that almost anything could turn up. Possibilities include Crested (Oriental) Honey and Grey-faced Buzzards, Chinese and Japanese Sparrowhawks, Arctic Warbler, Eyebrowed Thrush, Grey-streaked Flycatcher and Eastern Yellow and Grey Wagtails.



Black-bibbed Monarch by Dubi Shapiro

In the evenings, we will search for the lovely and quite distinctive Tanimbar Boobook (split from Hantu Boobook) in addition to Eastern Barn Owl and Large-tailed Nightjar. If indeed we are very lucky, we may even find the rarely seen and elusive Moluccan (Lesser) Masked Owl (a possible future lump with Australian Masked Owl).

A freshwater wetland has been inadvertently created in the process of building a new airport near Saumlaki and such habitat is rare in Wallacea. Here a variety of waterbirds are attracted to this site and possibilities include Wandering Whistling Duck, Green Pygmy Goose, Sunda Teal, Pacific Black Duck, Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants, Australasian Grebe, Pied and White-faced Herons, Nankeen Night Heron, Australian White Ibis, Royal Spoonbill, Buff-banded Rail, White-browed Crake, Australasian Swamphen and Pied Stilt.

We will also explore a nearby area of coastal mudflats and an adjacent football pitch for such species as Great-billed Heron, Australian Pelican, various egrets and herons and a large variety of migrant shorebirds.

Haruku Island. We'll embark on a very exciting boat trip to the nearby, offshore island of Haruku where we will spend the late afternoon and early evening waiting patiently for the rare and extremely localised Moluccan Megapode to reveal itself. Whilst waiting for dusk, we may also find Collared or Common Paradise Kingfishers, Spangled Drongo, Great Frigatebird and the odd Dusky Megapode amongst the Moluccans. After what will hopefully be a successful and thrilling outing, we will return by boat to Ambon to freshen up and enjoy a delicious dinner.



Arafura Fantail by Dubi Shapiro

Ambon. Ambon is the political centre of the Moluccas, and something of a regional transport 'hub'. This distinctively shaped island lies to the south-west of the much larger island of Seram, which itself is situated between the larger islands of Sulawesi and New Guinea, on the northern fringes of the rich Banda Sea. Ambon on this tour however is used merely as a gateway to reach the Kai Islands.

Kai Kecil & Kai Besar. The two largest islands of this tiny archipelago, each one host to its very own suite of endemics, in addition to some species of only a

slightly wider distribution. In recent years, the hominid population of Kai Kecil (comprised of two islands linked by a narrow isthmus, Kai Tual and Kai Kecil) has burgeoned and this, coupled with the depredations of the uncontrolled timber industry, has resulted in much of the accessible areas of forest being cleared for farming. On an island comprised entirely of uplifted coralline limestone, this results in very rapid forest loss and only very slow regeneration.



Orange-footed Scrubfowl by David Erterius

Kai Cecil. This island hosts several endemic and near-endemic species, and these will be our targets over the course of the day. Mixed species flocks support the handsome, rather shy but nevertheless quite common and endemic Kai Monarch, family groups of the endemic Golden-bellied (Kai Kecil) White-eye, the elusive Kai Cicadabird, the endemic *keyensis* subspecies of Rufous-sided Gerygone that is interestingly not found on Kai Besar, the endemic *assimilis* subspecies of Northern Fantail (likely to be split as Kai Fantail) and the ubiquitous and noisy Spangled Drongo (likely to be split as Kai Spangled Drongo), the flock leader. The lovely Wallace's Fruit Dove sits quietly in the upper canopy and often associates with fruiting trees and will also be a big target here. One of the most obvious species is the entirely greenish black Kai Coucal (recently split) which clambers clumsily about in areas of dense growth.

We should also encounter good numbers of pigeons and parrots, most of which share their range with neighbouring Lesser Sundas, central Moluccas or New Guinea and these include endemic *keyensis* subspecies of Amboyna Cuckoo-Dove, Stephan's Emerald Dove, the beautiful Rose-crowned and White-bibbed (Small Island) Fruit Doves, the huge and vociferous Pink-headed, Elegant and Pied Imperial Pigeons, the lovely Red Lory, Coconut and Red-flanked Lorikeets, *keiensis* subspecies of Yellow-capped Pygmy Parrot and Eclectus and the endemic *keyensis* subspecies of Red-cheeked Parrots.



Rose-crowned Fruit Dove by David Hoddinott

Other noteworthy species we may encounter here include Orange-footed Scrubfowl, the extremely pale *polionotus* subspecies of Variable Goshawk, the widespread but handsome Brahminy Kite, the endemic *obiensis* subspecies of Red-backed Buttonquail, Buff-banded Rail, White-browed Crake, the vocal but shy and unobtrusive Pale-vented Bush-hen, vociferous Brush Cuckoo, Large-tailed Nightjar, Uniform and Glossy Swiftlets, Collared, Little and Common Kingfishers, the lovely Papuan Pitta (recently split from Red-bellied/Blue-breasted Pitta), the blackish endemic *pollens* subspecies of Wallacean Cuckooshrike, endemic *keyensis* subspecies of Varied Triller, Pacific Swallow, endemic *rufipennis* subspecies of Grey Whistler, the distinctive and endemic *kuehni* subspecies of Drab Whistler, endemic *cucullatus* subspecies of Australasian Figbird, Island Monarch and Black-faced Munia. The gorgeous Elegant Pitta has also

been recorded here and we will certainly be alert to its presence. In addition, if the opportunity arises, we will also search for the almost-mythical endemic *remigialis* subspecies of Australian Boobook (currently placed within the Barking Owl complex by Birds of the Indonesian Archipelago field guide but within Australian Boobook by IOC). One therefore cannot help but expect that the race, whichever species it relates to, is likely to be given full, endemic species status soon like many of the other endemic subspecies.

Kai Besar. The larger and, by far, the more mountainous of the two larger Kai islands. Initially, we will likely bird the coastal forest along a small road and with a bit of luck, we should quickly find the endemic Pearl-bellied (Kai Besar) White-eye. With the island's sole endemic under our belt, we plan to follow a forest trail up into the hills to look for desirable species such as the localised Cinnamon-chested Flycatcher – a shy and scarce understory flycatcher otherwise restricted to the islands of Seram and Buru and this subspecies *siebersi* is endemic to Kai Besar. We will also be searching for the endemic *avicola* subspecies of Island Leaf Warbler (likely to be split as Kai Leaf Warbler). We can also expect to encounter the likes of Pacific Baza, Little Bronze Cuckoo, another chance at the shy endemic White-tailed Monarch, Arafura Fantail (possibly split in future as Supertramp Fantail), endemic *rufipennis* subspecies of Grey and endemic *kuehni* subspecies of Drab Whistlers, White-breasted Woodswallow, Metallic Starling, Tanimbar Friarbird, endemic *chlorolaema* subspecies of Black and endemic *keienisis* subspecies of Olive-backed Sunbirds (likely to be split as Sahul Sunbird) and Mistletoebird (likely to be split as Salvadori's Flowerpecker).



Wallace's Fruit Dove by Dubi Shapiro

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Undemanding. Suitable for all birding / wildlife interest levels.
Birding Ease		Moderate. Most species provide good visuals in open conditions but get trickier within forested environments. Some species are low density or require dedicated/repeated effort to find.
Accommodation		Comfortable to very comfortable.
Walking / Trails		Light-to-moderate walking and hiking on land.
Vehicles / Roads		N/A.
Photography		Good to excellent, depending on habitat.
Annoyances		Humidity levels are often rather high.

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 18 on the main tour;
- All meals from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 5 of the extension;
- Bottled or purified drinking water;
- All lodgings aboard The Lady Denok Liveaboard (nights 1 to 13) and on the Tanimbar Islands from nights 14 to 17;
- All lodgings on the extension;
- Ground transportation at various island stops during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees and landing permits;
- Local landowner fees;
- All guiding services;
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Checked baggage costs on all internal flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Camera fees;
- Optional excursions;
- 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.**
- **The cruise costs are subject to major foreign exchange fluctuations and unforeseen increases in tour related costs (especially the price of fuel) and may have to be adjusted as a result. You will be notified by email if fuel surcharges, or other price adjustments need to be implemented. Furthermore, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary due to unforeseen circumstances, but please be aware that we will attempt to stick as close to the original program as possible.**
- **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.**

- Our time off the ship includes boat cruises and light-to-moderate walking and hiking in refuges and preserves. Physical demands will be easy to moderate, but please bear in mind that our land excursions may involve a moderate amount of walking and standing. We emphasize that no one will be subjected to physical demands that exceed their capabilities. All walking will be done at a slow pace. If you have any physical limitations or medical conditions of any sort, please do let the Rockjumper office know in advance.
- With early starts, some long days in the field are to be expected.
- We will be birding in some remote areas well away from modern medical facilities.
- It is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Please note that internal flights have a checked luggage restriction of 10kg (+-22lb) and 7 kg (+-15 lb) for hand luggage.
- Your trip to Indonesia will be a moderately paced, but full travel experience in which birding activities are combined with relaxing cruise time. This trip offers considerable exposure to a seldom-visited part of the world, but with a clear emphasis on observing as many of the region's endemic and special birds as possible, as well as enjoying the scenic wonders of the islands we'll be visiting.
- Most days in the lowlands will be hot, dry, and sunny, but overcast conditions are frequent and some rain, heavy at times, can be expected in the afternoons and evenings. In montane areas it will range from very cool to warm. Humidity levels are often rather high.
- There will be limited opportunities for swimming and snorkelling at select sites along the cruise route. Our vessel is fully equipped with fins, masks, and snorkels free of charge. Participants who prefer to bring their own equipment are welcome to do so but should be aware of the weight this adds to their luggage.
- It is important to note that cruising times between the various islands may vary depending on weather conditions, wind speed and direction.

Arrival and Departure Details

The main tour begins early on day 1 with in internal flight from Bali to Labuan Bajo, where we board our liveaboard, the Lady Denok on arrival. Preferably, do arrive in Bali the day before the tour is due to begin. The tour will conclude after breakfast on day 18 in Yamdena, Indonesia.

The extension departs from Ambon on day 1 with an afternoon visit to Haruku Island. The tour will conclude after breakfast on day 5 at Karel Sadsuitubun Langgur Airport (IATA: LUV), Kai Islands, Indonesia.

As both tours end after an internal flight on the final day, it is recommended that you book your international flights to depart no earlier than the early evening.

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.

Denpasar International Airport, Bali (IATA: DPS), Indonesia and Mathilda Batlayeri Airport, Yamdena (IATA: SXK), Indonesia are the main ports of arrival and departure on the main tour.

Pattimura International Airport, Ambon (IATA: AMQ), Indonesia and Karel Sadsuitubun Langgur Airport, Kai Cecil (IATA: LUV), Indonesia are the main ports of arrival and departure on the extension.

Most internal flights will connect via Ambon (IATA: AMQ) or Jakarta (IATA: CGK), from where onward international flights can be taken.

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.