

Banda Sea Cruise, Indonesia

7th – 25th October 2023

Leader: James Eaton

Day 1 (7 Oct, Saturday):

International arrivals into Bali Denpasar International Airport (DPS). Night at Sulis Beach Hotel & Spa or similar. Jl. Wana Segara, Kuta. T: +62361765333. W: <http://www.sulishotelbali.com/>. Location: <https://g.page/sulishotel?share>

Day 2 (8 Oct):

Flight ID6333 from Bali to Labuanbajo, west Flores at 0800/0910, or similar. Board our vessel, the KTM Lady Denok (<https://www.ladydenokliveaboard.com>) and depart for Tanahjampea. En-route a few seabirds are likely, including our first Bulwer's Petrel and Red-footed and Brown Boobies.

Targets: Aleutian Tern, Bulwer's Petrel, Brown and Red-footed Boobies, Red-necked Phalarope, Streaked Shearwater.

Travel time: Labuanbajo – Tanahjampea: 115 miles / 185 km / 14 hours.

Day 3 (9 Oct):

Arrival off a village on the south coast of Tanahjampea around dawn. Following approval from village head we follow the track to the forest-edge for a full mornings birding through scrub and forest edge. In the late afternoon birding on the little-known island of Kalao, following optional snorkelling.

Habitat and terrain: 3-4km walk through village and open fields close to forest edge before reaching forest-edge. Rest of day birding along the forest-edge and along a trail through dry-streambed.

Targets: Tanahjampea (White-tipped) Monarch, Tanahjampea Jungle-flycatcher, Flores Sea Cuckoo Dove, Red-chested Flowerpecker, Pink-headed and Elegant Imperial Pigeons, Broad-billed Monarch, *emancipatum* Tenggara Cicadabird (split from Common), Sulawesi Myzomela, Sahul Sunbird (split from Olive-backed), Lemon-bellied White-eye, along with a variety of endemic subspecies worthy of further study.

Kalao targets: *virginialis* Elegant Pitta, Kalao Jungle-flycatcher, Flores Sea Cuckoo Dove, Orange-footed Scrubfowl.

Travel time: Tanahjampea – Kalao: 14 miles / 23 km / 2 hours.

Travel time: Kalao – Kalaotao: 65 miles / 100 km / 7 hours.

Day 4 (10 Oct):

Most likely, morning birding on Kalaotao, in the coastal degraded habitat. Late morning set-sail for Pantar.

Targets: Flores Sea Cuckoo Dove, *everetti* Golden Whistler, *virginialis* Elegant Pitta, along with endemic races of Banda Sea (Rufous-sided) Gerygone and Supertramp (Arafura) Fantail, shared only with Madu.

At-sea targets: Red-footed and Brown Boobies, White-tailed Tropicbird, Brown Noddy, Sooty and Bridled Terns, Heinroth's Shearwater, Sperm, Short-finned Pilot, Melon-headed and Blue Whales, Spinner, Spotted and Bottle-nosed Dolphins.

Travel time: Kalaotao – Pantar: 185 miles / 300 km / 20 hours.

Day 5 (11 Oct):

Arrival into Pantar in the early afternoon. Night-birding after dusk. After night-birding, depart for Alor.

Habitat and terrain: Open forest and mangroves, largely from track.

Targets: Alor Boobook (split from Southern), Rufous-backed Dwarf-kingfisher, Wallace's Elegant / Ornate Pitta, Black-fronted Flowerpecker, Alor Cuckooshrike (taxon *alfrediana* to be split from Wallacean Cuckooshrike, endemic to Pantar and Alor).

Travel time: Pantar – Alor: 45 miles / 70 km / 5 hours.

Day 6 (12 Oct):

Dawn arrival on Alor. Birding along road in the highlands of Alor for the morning, up to 1200m (2–3 hours drive depending on road condition), return to boat in the early evening. Set sail for Wetar.

Habitat and terrain: Open forest, grass and scrub, largely from road, <1,200m.

Targets: Alor Myzomela, Sunda Grasshopper Warbler, Sunda Bush Warbler, Timor Stubtail, undescribed 'Eucalypt Cuckoo Dove' (currently subsumed under Little Cuckoo Dove), Olive-headed Lorikeet, Flores Spangled Drongo (split from Wallacean), Flores Hawk Eagle, Yellow-crested Cockatoo, 'Alor Cuckooshrike' (split from Wallacean), Black-backed Fruit Dove, Black-fronted Flowerpecker, and a slim chance of Flores Green Pigeon.

Travel time: Alor – Wetar: 110 miles / 180 km / 12 hours.

Day 7 (13 Oct):

Most of the day at sea. If time, snorkelling session at Reong island, off NW Wetar. Arrival off Naumatong village in the evening.

Targets: Red-footed and Brown Boobies, White-tailed Tropicbird, Brown Noddy, Sooty and Bridled Terns, Sperm, Short-finned Pilot, Melon-headed and Blue Whales. This area is a particularly good area for whales, especially Sperm Whale. On Reong island, Beach Thick-knee and Bonelli's Eagle both possible.

Day 8 (14 Oct):

Full day birding in Naumatong Gorge. In the evening depart for next birding site, further east.

Habitat and terrain: Birding from ankle (occasionally) knee-deep clear stream and trail, up to 60m, walking up to 5km inland.

Targets: Wetar Ground Dove, Timor Imperial Pigeon, Timor Cuckoo Dove, Black Cuckoo Dove, Jonquil Parrot, Wetar Scops Owl, Olive-headed and Iris Lorikeets, Wetar Figbird, Wetar Oriole, Timor Gerygone, Timor Leaf Warbler, Fawn-breasted Whistler, Banda (White-tufted) Honeyeater, Black-necklaced Honeyeater, Wetar (Crimson-hooded) Honeyeater.

Travel time: Naumatong – Lurang: 13 miles / 21 km / 1.5 hours.

Day 9 (15 Oct):

Birding around Lurang. Access here can be tricky to organise, but could include gaining significant elevation, with road or trackside birding. Much of where we bird depends on availability of vehicles, which can only be organised on-arrival due to lack of phone signal in the village. Proposed departure for Leti in the evening.

Targets: Timor Imperial Pigeon, Black Cuckoo Dove, Bonelli's Eagle, Jonquil (Olive-shouldered) Parrot, Wetar Scops Owl, Olive-headed and Iris Lorikeets, Marigold Lorikeet, Wetar Figbird, Wetar Oriole, Orange-banded Thrush, Timor (Plain) Gerygone, Fawn-breasted Whistler, Banda (White-tufted) Honeyeater, Black-necklaced Honeyeater, Wetar (Crimson-hooded) Honeyeater, 'Timor Nightjar' (undescribed species currently subsumed under Large-tailed).

Travel time: Wetar – Leti: 110 miles / 175 km / 15 hours.

Day 10 (16 Oct):

Late morning arrival on Leti, with snorkelling session offshore in the heat of the day. Birding for the afternoon and night-birding. Depart for Damar in the late evening.

Habitat and terrain: Open forest and open country, villages.

Targets: Kisar Friarbird, 'Banda Bronze Cuckoo' (a mooted split from Little), Banda Sea Fantail (split from Northern), *moae* Southern Boobook, *compar* Fawn-breasted Whistler (though following taxonomic revision, it was previously considered a Golden Whistler), Wallacean Whistler, Banda Sea (Rufous-sided) Gerygone, *elegantula* Supertramp Fantail, Banda Honeyeater, Black-backed and Rose-crowned Fruit Doves and Savanna Nightjar.

Travel time: Leti – Terbang Selatan: 85 miles / 135 km / 9 hours

Day 11 (17 Oct):

At sea, travelling north-east through the Banda Sea. Lunch-time stop at Terbang Selatan island for some stunning snorkelling at a pristine coral-reef. Arrival off Damar in the early evening, meet with village-head to arrange access to forest for following day.

Travel time: Terbang Selatan – Damar: 17 miles / 27 km / 2.5 hours

Day 12 (18 Oct):

Most of the day birding on Damar, reaching up to 300m. Evening departure for Babar.

Habitat and terrain: Forest-edge and forest interior along well-marked, steep trail that is very humid and hot!

Targets: Damar Flycatcher, *dammariana* Golden Whistler, Orange-banded Thrush, Banda Sea Fantail, Black-backed Fruit Dove, Black-bibbed Monarch, Banda (White-tufted) Honeyeater.

Travel time: Damar – Babar: 80 miles / 130 km / 9 hours.

Day 13 (19 Oct):

Arrival into Babar in the early morning, probably in time for birding. Afternoon and evenings birding on Babar.

Habitat and terrain: Open forest birding along road.

Targets: Babar Whistler (proposed split from Golden), Wallace's Fruit Dove, *cinnamomina* Southern Boobook, *cognata* Pied Bushchat, Banda Sea Gerygone, *advena* Timor Stubtail, Cinnamon-tailed Fantail (birds on Babar are an undescribed taxon), *elegantula* Supertramp Fantail, Wallacean Whistler, Banda Myzomela, *salvadorii* Red-chested Flowerpecker, Tricoloured Parrotfinch, Orange-banded Thrush, Wallace's Fruit Dove, Cinnamon-banded Kingfisher and Five-coloured Munia.

Day 14 (20 Oct):

Mornings birding on Babar if needed, before departing for the Tanimbar islands.

Targets: Red-tailed Tropicbird, Streaked Shearwater, Tahiti Petrel. Melon-headed, Short-finned Pilot, Pygmy Killer and Sperm Whales.

Travel time: Babar – Anggarmasa: 110 miles / 175 km / 12 hours.

Day 15 (21 Oct):

Stop at a small island close to Anggarmasa island in the early morning for birding, and optional snorkelling. Arrival into Saumlaki, Tanimbar in the early afternoon, in time for late afternoon birding.

Night at Beringin Dua Hotel, 3 Jl. Mathilda Batlayeri, Saumlaki. T: +6291821456. Location:

<https://goo.gl/maps/oTMa4mstwiNhK9MH6>

Habitat and terrain: Walking on sand and rocks around small island, and walking through trail-less scrub.

Targets: Tanimbar Scrubfowl, Pied Imperial Pigeon, Great-billed Heron, Pied Oystercatcher, Beach Thick-knee.

Travel time: Anggarmasa – Saumlaki: 16 miles / 25 km / 2 hours.

Days 16-17 (22-23 Oct):

Two full days birding on Tanimbar. Nights at Beringin Dua Hotel, 2 Jalan Sifnana, Saumlaki, 97664.

Habitat and terrain: Open forest birding along roads and trails.

Targets: Wallace's Fruit Dove, Tanimbar Cockatoo, Blue-streaked Lory, Charming (Long-tailed) Fantail, Tanimbar Oriole, Tanimbar Friarbird, Tanimbar Flyrobin, Tanimbar Starling, Tanimbar Triller, Tanimbar Spangled Drongo (a proposed split from Wallacean), Pied Bronze Cuckoo, Tanimbar (Loetoe) Monarch, Banda Sea (Black-bibbed) Monarch, Tanimbar Boobook, Banda Honeyeater, Tanimbar Bush Warbler, Slaty-backed Thrush, Fawn-breasted Thrush, Banda Sea Pitta, Salvadori's Flowerpecker (proposed split from Mistletoebird), Elegant and Pink-headed Imperial Pigeons, Wallacean Cuckooshrike, and (Moluccan) Masked Owl.

Day 18 (24 Oct):

Morning departure from Saumlaki Airport (SXX) to Jakarta (CGK), via Ambon and Ujung Pandang on IW1515/JT881 at 0935/1115, 1330/1415, 1610/1730. Transfer to hotel.

Night at Swiss-belinn or similar, Sentra Benda Rawa Bokor, Jl. Husein Sastranegara 9, Jakarta. T: +622129440888. Location:

<https://g.page/swissbelinnairportjakarta?share>.

Day 19 (25 Oct, Wednesday):

International departures from Jakarta International Airport (CGK).

Please note: travel times are purely an average estimate as they vary depending on current sea-conditions.

Google map of islands visited: <https://tinyurl.com/btabandamap>

Contact details:

Birdtour Asia office/WhatsApp: +44 7813338321

Raja, local guide: +62 81290250988

James Eaton WhatsApp: +60142234220

Lady Denok Satellite phone: + 87 077 611 0250 (Outgoing 10USD/min, Incoming 5USD/min)