

Indonesia's Best Birding | Sept. 11 – 29, 2024 Komodo Dragon Extension | Sept. 29 – Oct. 3, 2024 Trip Report by Peg Abbott



With Guide Nick Upton, host Peg Abbott of Naturalist Journeys and a number of talented local guides including Hari and Angga (Way Kambas), Adun (West Java), Boneng and Haru (East Java and Boneng on Bali), Max (Flores) and tour managers Raja and Roman. Our five participants were George, Kay, Phil, Deb and Cathy.



Tues., Sept. 10 Early Arrivals to Jakarta

Five of our group of six arrived early today, Deb, Cathy, Phil, George and Kay. They found the recommended Bluebird taxi service (heroically ignoring the other taxi touts) and got settled into the hotel to rest up with relative ease. It was nice to have time to rest and regroup after the many hours of flying. Several were pinned to the Wi-Fi as back home it was the presidential debate in a highly contested race year. Soon we would leave that behind for our focus here, but on this day, it was still a tug. Nick arrived late evening.

Wed., Sept. 11 Arrivals – Welcome to Indonesia!

Our flock was complete today with the arrival of Peg on Cathay Pacific in the early afternoon. Poor Phil arrived without his luggage, but thankfully it would show up a few days hence and he had it tagged to track that progress.



At 6:30 PM, we met guide Nick Upton to all get acquainted and to enjoy a welcome dinner the hotel restaurant. Most of us chose from some of the Chinese food specials. Nick gave us prompts for the flight the following day and we turned in for needed rest. Our birding and exploration of Indonesia would begin tomorrow!

Thurs., Sept. 12 Bandar Lampung | Satwa Lodge | Way Kambas National Park

While we'd rather not have returned to an airport after our long flights, the promise of 3 nights at Satwa Eco Lodge right on the edge of fabulous Way Kamba national park was motivating. We had a bit of a mix-up as the airport was different than recent years, and we got let off at the wrong terminal. As Deb said, we got some good steps in ahead of sitting, and with luck and little time to spare we did make our flight.

It was a quick 50-minute flight from Jakarta on Java to Bandar Lampung in southern Sumatra. We were met by Hari, our exceptional local guide who had worked with Nick in the past. We drove through numerous villages, markets, farm lands and open areas for two hours, and as Nick predicted, we did not see any birds outside of the protected areas. Without winged distractions we made good time and arrived to a warm welcome and a very good lunch of corn fritters, chicken soup, potatoes and salad, with luscious fruit for dessert.

We settled into our rooms at this very inviting, locally-run lodge with just 8 rooms. Hari showed us a Sunda Frogmouth, and it seemed to be sitting on the start of a nest. It was a male and we had scope views and some great photo opportunity; what a species to start our list with!

We went out at 3:30PM in two safari vehicles, open air with bench seats. Several locals joined Hari to take care of us, helping us in and out and providing cold drinks to keep us hydrated. We walked over to a roost for Sunda Scops Owl and then went to a nest area for Buffy Fish Owl with great hopes of seeing the adult with the youngster that had recently fledged. Success! The adult was very close to the road (by a local cemetery) and it was shy, but we got good looks before it flew back into the forest, leaving "Junior" for us to marvel at. What a charismatic owl, with a rich cinnamon color and intricate pattern.

We then headed over to the park entrance, and decided to walk on an open road that led to the Elephant Center, a local attraction we would visit later. There was some traffic coming and going but we mainly had the road to ourselves, and we ambled along, watching for birds. Two sightings stand out, two difficult-to-see forest kingfishers that we got scope views of, Banded, and Rufous-collared. We watched a Red-billed Malkoha, a type of cuckoo, saw our first Asian Emerald Dove, and observed a Greater Racket-tailed Drongo.



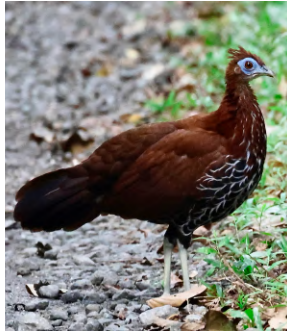
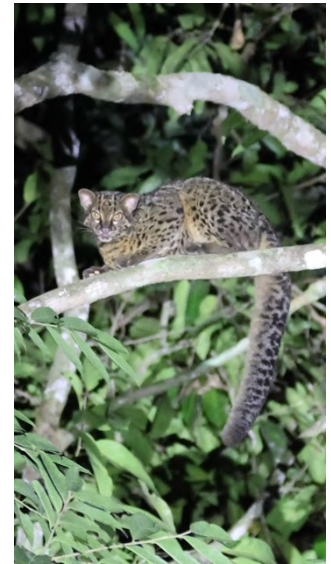
We stayed out past dark to do some night birding before our return, and it turned out to be very productive. Right at dusk Hari took us to a spot known to be good for nightjars, and we were able to see Large-tailed and Malaysian Eared Nightjars well. The Malaysian was large, and very raptor like. The Large-tailed came in and perched on a branch, uttering its throated loud “glug” calls. A range-restricted nightjar, Bonaparte’s, came into Hari’s call and flew above us, then landed twice, long enough for photos and our collective admiration. We also heard Savanna Nightjar in the distant open field, so it was a four nightjar night!

Dinner was a nice sesame beef, rice, bok choy, and a lovely cucumber and carrot salad, with bright magenta dragon fruit for dessert. A Large-tailed Nightjar on the grounds called through the night.

Fri., Sept. 13 Way Kambas National Park

We had a 5 AM wake-up for breakfast and birding, planning to leave at 6 AM, a pattern we would keep for much of the trip as it was best to be out early and then take an afternoon break in the hot time of the day. Even if we were not birding, we’d be up, as the roosters crowed and the call to prayer began; it continued through breakfast and as we got underway.

What a morning it was! A flock of Red Junglefowl were on the road as we drove out. The forest of Way Kambas NP had been logged, so while there were not giant trees, a lush canopy arched above the road as we drove through the gate and tree density was high. We made several stops over the course of the morning, walking for an hour or so, then driving to another section. We listened for calls, then the guides skillfully drew in some of the more difficult species for us to see. It was not easy birding but highly rewarding and we saw a number of species we could only see in Sumatra, species with range maps that were more aligned with the Malaysian Peninsula which is mainland. We had great success with woodpeckers, getting good looks at Barred, Buff-necked, and White-bellied. Two species of broadbill were high on our hoped-for list and with some diligence we saw them both, getting scope views of Black-and-Yellow and Barred. The barbets called loudly and while often quite tame took a bit of work but in time we had a group of six Sooty Barbets and a pair of Red-crowned. Fluffy-backed Babbler were adorable, sitting two to a branch preening each other. We saw both male and female Raffle’s Malkoha,



quite different in plumage, conspicuously feeding in the canopy. Rufous-tailed Tailor bird put on a good show. Photography was tough with SO many branches, and such a lush canopy, but we did get good shots of Gray-chested Jungle Flycatcher and Red-bearded Bee-eater. Blue-crowned Hanging Parrots were a treat, and scope views of a beautiful male Scarlet-rumped Trogon which Phil dubbed the “spectacular-everything” trogon.

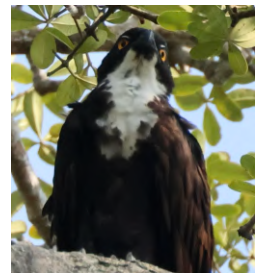
We saw mammals too: two types of squirrels, Plantation and Prevost’s, the very pale Sumatran Surili (or Mitered Langur), and the largest of the Lesser Apes, Siamang, one of the gibbons. Dark black, they appeared as silhouettes in the gray light, but active ones as they brachiated with long limbs stretched out across connecting branches over the road. We saw a female and a half-sized young one and were thrilled. We heard troops calling several times while in the forest, such an evocative sound.

Back for lunch to a nice curried fish stew with rice, green beans, fritters and fruit for dessert. Kay checked for our Sunda Frogmouth, which was no longer on the nest. We’d check back for this continuing story but tried to surmise what was up. It’s a great point in the trip when daily news is about nature and not about politics or events back home!

After a welcome break, sitting out on the porch to take in a nice breeze, we headed out for the afternoon. It was quite active and we got wonderful looks at some sought-after species such as Red-naped Trogon. As dusk approached, we had a great glimpse at the behavior of a pair of Br own Boobook Owls that were calling, then flew into a tall dead snag, with one going into a nest hole and the other standing guard at the top. In moonlight it was a nice saga to follow.

Sat., Sept. 14 Way Kambas National Park

The call to prayers started at 4:23AM, so we were ready for breakfast at 5:30 and were in the park just after 6 AM. We drove a way up the track to an area of a clearing near the boobook owl nest and got really good looks, in good light, of both Black-eared and Red-crowned Barbets, Violet Cuckoo, and Blue-throated Bee-eater. A Prevost’s Squirrel, so unusual with its bright red and white belly markings, came out on an epiphyte-laden branch of one of



the largest emergent trees and we enjoyed watching its antics as it scurried about 60 feet up the canopy. We also saw Long-tailed Macaques and had a symphony of calls once again from the Siamang.

We walked back and forth in this area, almost constantly finding something new to scope, including a pair of Bat Hawks, sitting and preening 100 feet up in another emergent tree. The little Rufous-tailed Tailorbirds were active, as were a pair of Ferruginous Babblers. We saw 30 species on this morning walk, more than the other outings and quite a few of them new. Nick was slowly educating us that in these thick lush forests on Indonesian islands, birds are thinly distributed, and you can walk the same patch of ground and keep seeing new species, again and again. Each encounter did feel special and we high-fived more than a few of them. Cathy spotted a Barking Deer, and we were able to see the Malayan Crested Fireback again, a very handsome pheasant, working the road track in the morning along with Red Junglefowl and Asian Emerald Dove. The morning passed quickly, and as we were going out for a full afternoon, we headed in about 11 AM for a break.

We left for the afternoon at 2:30 PM, a bit earlier than usual as we were to drive to the end of the road to a launch area for a boat on the Way Kanan River. We boarded two small, heavy wooden boats that were awkward to steer and outfitted with aging motors, but we persevered and had a grand time floating this ribbon between tall palms and other trees. We saw Gray-headed Fish Eagle, three species of hornbill (Black, Oriental Pied and Bushy-crested) and a favorite for many, the Black-and-red Broadbill, a gaudy-colored large broadbill with a bright blue bill. Stork-billed Kingfishers and Purple Herons flew tree to tree, and Java Pond Heron was new. Time passed quickly, and we returned as a beautiful sun-painted sky faded to dusk. We saw a Red Giant Flying Squirrel in the spotlight coming home, another great mammal for the trip.

Sun., Sept. 15 Way Kambas National Park | Jakarta

The drama of our Sunda Frogmouth, back on the nest yesterday but very hot and panting through the afternoon, was over today. Hari found the nest on the ground, and thought it was likely predated by a flying squirrel that took the eggs.

Our morning was shorter due to catching a mid-afternoon flight, so we decided to work the road that led to the Elephant Center and to bird the open area of the Elephant Center. This is a place where elephants used for logging and other work retired, and while we did not like seeing them tethered to graze, they were treated kindly, and we watched the mahouts give them baths and bring them to water. A young one ran around mischievously and Indonesian visitors, including lots of kids, were arriving to interact with them.



We checked out several stretches of the road, with the prize being a tiny but brilliant Rufous-backed Dwarf Kingfisher perched in a young section of forest. We would have never found this, and really marveled at both Hari and Nick's fine skills at finding birds in such thick forest.

Near two open ponds we had good views of more widespread species, including Common Iora and Black-winged Flycatcher Shrike.

We drove back to Bandar Lampung airport with a packed lunch to eat along the way, caught our flight with ease, and were back at the hotel in Jakarta by 4PM. It was nice to have a bit of time to reorganize, use the high-speed Wi-Fi, and have an early dinner before retiring for a good night's rest.

Mon., Sept. 16 Jakarta Bay | Drive to the Mountains

One of the reasons we chose the airport hotel we use is the convenience of having an early breakfast, needed each day we were staying there either due to flights or, like today, an exciting outing. Today was a great change of pace from lush forest birding, with an early morning boat at nearby Muara Angke Wildlife Reserve, a section of the city's coastline with marsh and mangroves. Sadly the area is heavily polluted with lots of trash, but somehow the birds get by, and the tides refresh the mudflats each day. Birds were super abundant right from the start, and seeing 25+ rare Milky Storks almost right away only raised our enthusiasm all the more. We found Black-backed Swamphen, White-breasted Waterhen, and Black-winged Stilt, plus abundant Black-crowned Night Herons. There were herons of all sorts with Java Pond Herons being the most common at 200+ tallied on our eBird list.

Going down the canal was fun, with colorful fishing boats lining one side, and mangroves, black and red, on the other. We pulled up on the bank in one section where we hoped to see the endangered, endemic Sunda (Javan) Coucal and were thrilled that it was possible; we had good looks of it perched and flying. We also saw Greater Coucal at this site, Racket-tailed Treepie, and several small birds in the reeds and shrub vegetation including Plain and Bar-winged Prinias, Clamorous Reed Warbler, and Golden-headed Cisticola.

Moving back into the main Jakarta Bay, we passed rusting fishing ships moored in the mud, decorated by dozens of Sunda Teal that rested on decks and wires. We started to see Whiskered Terns, then thousands of colorful fishing floats, fuel-can plastic jugs repurposed to hold up nets and make the structure for fish farms and shellfish aquaculture. George looked up the activity here, so concentrated and we learned a lot about several projects to farm the sea here.



We continued on, threading our way through lines of purple, blue and yellow jugs, getting past them to a row of pylons anchored in the shallows, probably at the deeper water edge, providing great landing posts for both Christmas Island and Lesser Frigatebirds. It was about an hour out to sea, but the breeze was lovely and the day bright. Behind the fish floats were the high rise buildings of Jakarta. But once at the pylons, our eyes were trained on sorting out large (Christmas Island) and small (Lesser, the same size as the Little Black Cormorants also there) and watching the antics between birds. We could photograph and observe male, female and immature of each species, and watch more dominant individuals push those of lesser rank off these prized perches. There were also Great Crested Terns and one Common Tern.

We returned and while reluctant to leave, we needed the afternoon to travel to the Ciwidey Tea Plantation area, about 3 ½ hours away.

We had one of the best meals of the trip en route, at a restaurant chosen by Roger; it had soups served in terrines atop a heat coil, rich curries of eggplant and veggies, salads, and various beef and fish dishes. For dessert we had a delicious light pancake filled with coconut.

Traffic going out of the city was fine, but oh my, those poor souls going in had slow progress. This was a Monday and the end of a four-day holiday so particularly intense. We had such a grand morning, and after the drive we were tired, so we opted to just relax and enjoy an early dinner and some rest. Dinner was lavish and kept coming out as basket trays full of veggies, four kinds of protein (fish, chicken, tofu, and tempeh) rice, noodles and more. They had quite a few fruit drinks we enjoyed tasting, this region being known for growing strawberries. Our bird list tally was now full of waterbirds for the first time, and we enjoyed listing them.

Tues., Sept. 17 Kawah Putih Crater and Park

Our hotel was in a resort area with multiple hotels and restaurants, and the call to prayer with a loudspeaker was deafening. So as that is at 4:30AM (daily) we were up and ready for the 30-minute uphill drive to where the forest meets tea plantations at the highest point of the mountain. Adun, a talented local guide, met us there.

The area was busier than normal, likely a spill-over from the holiday weekend and people choosing to add another day to the long weekend. Kawah Putih is a park that covers the forests and a crater of one of the local volcanos. It



is very popular for walking and for seeing the cerulean-green waters of a lake filling the volcano. We birded the edge of the tea fields first. Planted by the Dutch, they were still fully operational, glistening green in the sun. We found two species of monkeys here, Orange-spotted Bulbul, Crescent-chested Babbler, and Striated Grassbird. We looked without success for Horsfield's Thrush, but had good luck finding other species of this higher elevation including Trilling Shrike Babbler, Orange-spotted Bulbul, Javan Tesia, Javan Fulvetta and White-flanked Sunbird. Nick excitedly called out when he heard and quickly found a Javan Trogon. This stunning bird truly is a rainbow of color and we had it in good light. We were so excited we simply blocked the road for several minutes until a patient truck driver honked for us to move aside. Thankfully the trogon stayed in the area and we got repeated good views. Next up was another special bird, a midnight-blue species, the Javan Cochoa. We heard its high pitched whistle several times and then keen-eyed Roger found it and he and Nick quickly got us scope views.

After these great birds, it was time for breakfast, and we returned to what Phil would describe as the best breakfast restaurant in West Java – right in the parking lot of the park. In a covered shelter our drivers were cooking pancakes and eggs, and had a great spread of very fresh fruits, cookies, some cakes from the local baker, peanut butter and a good supply of coffee, teas and hot chocolate. Volcano Swiftlets swooped high around us, and we spotted a soaring Black Eagle. This swiftlet lives only in four areas on Java, all volcanic craters. Nick sent us a map that evening on our WhatsApp chat – pretty incredible in its tight range restriction, yet plentiful once in their range.

Fortified, we joined the general tourists in the area to walk down a series of steps to the lake level of the volcanic crater, a surreal and barren landscape smelling of Sulphur, with odd colors and standing dead trees. A sign urged us to use caution and limit the visit to 15 minutes due to the fumes.

We took a break in the afternoon, and then went back out for more roadside birding in the forests of the park. We got glimpses of Pink-headed Fruit Dove, a bird of exquisite beauty and luckily seen even better the following day. We stayed out into the darkness to try for some night birds, setting ourselves up on a narrow trail to quietly wait, but on this evening, we would only hear the Javan Scops Owl. We actually moved down into an open parking lot area where we heard one calling, but it was so thick, a sighting was just not possible. It was fun to be out, and the temperature was perfect; it was so nice to be up in the mountains.



Lunch had been good, but so ample we were just not hungry for another large spread, so the restaurant made some nice chicken soup with rice that hit the spot.

Wed., Sept. 18 Kawah Putih | Cibodas Botanical Gardens

We headed out early, with a plan to return to pack up ahead of leaving for the next part of the 4-night West Java section of our journey. We started out searching for Scaly Thrush in a quiet area, away from the road, walking a maze of trails through lush forest. This is a ground-feeding thrush, and we scanned and scanned but had no luck today either. We did have a good sighting of three Eyebrowed Wren Babblers that were at first furtive, then settled into feeding on one of the narrow trails in our view. We headed from here to the intersection of the road down to the clearing where we'd scanned for Pink-headed Fruit Doves, and right out of the car it was hopping. At least four Sunda Bush Warblers were feeding out in the open in some white flowering shrubs; above them were Orange-spotted Bulbuls. A mixed flock made its presence known and soon we were sorting and diligently trying to observe and photograph Crescent-chested Babbler, Trilling Shrike Babbler and Javan Gray-throated White-eyes. Adun called us over to the scope excitedly and he had found a perched Pink-headed Fruit Dove. We got cracking views and photographs. It was high-fives all around and time for field breakfast. The guys had it all set up and cooked scrambled eggs right on the spot!

This was our final morning birding on the forested slopes around Kawah Putih and overall we'd done quite well. We headed back, packed up and were on our way by 10:30 AM. We had a 3 ½ hour drive with a lunch stop and arrived by 3 PM to a most welcoming place, a guest house rented for us inside the Cibodas Botanical Garden. Our backyard was to be a 200+ acre protected area now the core of a larger national park that also includes Gede Volcano where we would hike the following day. The gardens have some massive trees, dating from 1852, started by a Dutch botanist and chosen for this ideal climate at just over 4000 feet.

We had tea and snacks, enjoyed sitting with the garden in view, and walked a bit. From the upper garden we had a view of one of the volcanos, Pangrango, lovely in late afternoon light. Birding was quiet but the views were grand, and we returned in time to try for Salvadori's Nightjar right at sunset. We did hear two calling but they did not come in to our call. We were successful with seeing Javan Frogmouth with its bad hair day filoplumes waving in the spotlight – what a crazy-looking bird!



Dinner was brought in to us, so perfect for saving us time and driving. We had the whole house to ourselves and ate around the table as if we were home, a very nice part of our trip. The house next door had students from a school in Jakarta, here for three days for a field trip. A group of high school girls came over and asked if they could talk with us. We each asked questions and had some laughs and good interchange; a nice encounter.

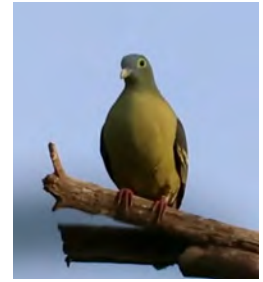
Thurs., Sept. 19 Gunung Gede Pangrango National Park Hike

Nick encouraged us to get out early to try for some secretive species and we were richly rewarded for doing so. In just a short walk we found two species of forktails, Pygmy Cupwing, Lesser Shortwing, and a real prize, Sunda Thrush. We were out for about 45 minutes and returned to the hotel where our patient drivers had prepared breakfast at the guest house. Outside, our teen-aged neighbors had their exercise class, women in their burkas, men in T-shirts, stretching and shouting along with a loudspeaker. Nothing like youthful energy in any culture!

We drove just a short ways to the trailhead of the national park, named for twin volcanoes, Gede and Pangrango, each reaching over 9000 feet. From here it was all birding and travel by foot, and we took it super slow so no one would get discouraged. The route was uphill, and much of the way was on a stone path with steps. Just as we would get winded, Raja and Adun or Nick would call out a new bird, so we were lured up and up, eventually Peg, Deb and Kay all getting to the junction of a trail to a popular waterfall. At this elevation the habitat starts to change and we were thrilled to see Fire-tufted Barbet well, two birds, calling and moving about in the canopy. This is the only spot on our tour it would be possible so we were happy to have success.

We saw so many highlights this day, starting off with Yellow-winged Hanging Parrots seen just out of the cars, feeding on flowering shrubs, so fairly low and easy to get field markings on. They were joined by Javan Munia. The forest is lush here, and for the full day we were immersed in the tree canopy. Major rivers of the region start their courses here, with most going north to the Java Sea and one flowing to the southern coast of Java and the Indian Ocean. We paralleled a stream for part of our way, and at a small lake found Blue-eared Kingfisher. Other birds of note included White-bibbed Babbler, Chestnut-bellied Partridge, and Sunda Robin.

The trail was marked in kilometers so we could track our progress; we made it up three rest stations and got down feeling our muscles. The mileage was not that much, probably round-trip about four miles, but walking on cobblestones took attention and balance and was an art in itself – we all felt happy to get those boots off at the end of the trail!



We tried again to see Salvadori's Nightjar, which teased us with calling but did not come into view. As it was right out the door of our guest house, it was easy to do, but our guides were baffled at their lack of appearance. We assured them we understood – it's birding with all its ups and downs. As our species list was now over 200 halfway through the trip, we were indeed feeling quite satisfied.

Fri., Sept. 20 Cibodas Botanical Gardens | Jakarta

We woke up early to bird Cibodas Botanical Garden, right out the door of our accommodations. We did the same early route to try again for the secretive forketails, and managed quick views at a Sunda Forktail, the smaller of Java's two species. Today the Sunda Thrush was most cooperative and fed in leaf litter just off the road. Seeing Pygmy Cupwing, also secretive, with ease was a plus of early rising. After a quick breakfast at the hotel, we started our leisurely amble around the gardens. It started off with a bang, with seeing the endemic Olive-backed Tailorbird, and the Javan Kingfisher, a most impressive bird with a huge red bill and chocolate upper parts. From then on it was surprisingly slow; though we enjoyed walking through massive Araucaria trees from Australia, pines from North America and palms from around the world, the bird life was very quiet. A few of us were under the weather from a bout of "tourista" so were happy to find lots of benches and tree stumps – for tuitous timing as we could bird with less than the usual effort. Pygmy Tits were common, as well as Cave Swiftlets, and two species of bulbuls, Orange-spotted and Sooty-headed. We combed the trees and found a couple of bright yellow Sangkar White-eyes, then decided to drive to a new section to try to intercept a flock. We did find a perched Crested Serpent Eagle, and during our break back at the lodge a flying Black Eagle. Persistent Peg was on a mission for us to find Blue Nuthatch, so we climbed the hill above our lodge for one more try. We did find Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, a little family group, and Cinereous Tit, but had to be content with that.

It was time to pack up as we wanted to time our drive back to Jakarta to miss the afternoon traffic. We bid good-bye to Adun, our patient and wonderful local guide here, and then stopped pretty soon after departing for lunch at a spacious restaurant where we tried noodle dishes, chicken soups and, taking Phil's lead, strawberry floats complete with strawberry ice cream.

We made great time and arrived at our hotel just before 3PM. No one minded time to chill, take a shower, catch up on Wi-Fi or download photos. We met at 5:30 to walk over to a neighboring hotel that had a bar, and Peg



treated all to a round of drinks. It was fun to just relax together and we had a bonus bird walking over, a high-flying group of storks that could only be Asian Woolly-necked Storks with their distinctive pattern. Dinner was at the hotel, and by now several had their favorites to reorder, the Chinese food options quite popular.

Sat., Sept. 21 Jakarta | Banyuwangi | Alas Purwo National Park

Our local operator had smoothed logistics for us with an online check-in, so the initial part of our flight went smoothly. We boarded on time, but then got word we had to off-load due to a mechanical issue. There were some moments of “what-if” planning, but thankfully it was only about an hour and a half delay and another plane was ready with the same crew to take us to Banyuwangi.

Phil commented right away that “this is not Jakarta” as we landed and saw a riot of blooming trees, verdant rice fields, and other agricultural crops including watermelon. We had a new crew of drivers and guides; this time we were in a mini-van all together with our luggage traveling behind. Along the way we admired fields of dragon fruit growing (with lights on almost every plant to extend the pollination time into night and boost growth) and corn. We stopped for lunch at a delightful place that once again provided us with way too much food, a variety of chicken, fish, veggies, rice and fruit. Freshly squeezed soursop and guava juices were most refreshing.

After lunch, we headed right to the park, wanting to be at the savannah at sunset time. We passed a parade honoring the birthday of Mohammed, with a procession of trucks and people walking and singing. The floats on the trucks had big paper flowers on displays, with cooked and colored eggs as flower centers for kids to eat, while ladies in lovely dresses walked alongside, dancing. The last vehicle was the DJ with music and voice.

Alas Purwo National Park is situated further out the Blambangan Peninsula. Blambangan was the name of the last Hindu Kingdom not consumed by the Arab world, but eventually taken over by the Dutch. Many travelers travel to this area to experience legendary surfing on the southeastern point of the island. We of course, came to bird!

Our accommodation was simple but clean and welcoming, with friendly staff. We had a cold drink and quick snack and headed over to a viewing area overlooking a large grassland opening rimmed by forest. In the parking lot we had super looks at Black-banded Barbet, Yellow-eared Barbet, and Slender-billed Crow. At the edge of the opening, there was a large herd of Banteng with numerous calves and some very large bulls, mixing with Rusa Deer, a species very similar to our elk as the males carry large antlers. A couple of family groups of Eurasian Wild Boar were grazing and near a leaky water tower a Greater Coucal poked around for insects in close view. Here we



found our first Green Peafowl, dozens of them, and Green Junglefowl. Two species of hornbill flew to evening roosts as the light faded, Oriental Pied and Wreathed. This was very pleasant birding, with a nice breeze and places to sit.

We returned to a most ample dinner at our hotel, and being near the sea we had a fish dish, a shrimp dish and a mix with veggies and chicken, plus our nightly plate of tofu and tempeh.

Sun., Sept. 22 Alas Purwo National Park | Gunung Ijen Volcano

We spent the morning birding at Alas Purwo National Park located at the southeastern tip of eastern Java. There were roads off the main road, quiet places not allowing motorcycles, and on this trail, we saw a lively family of three Great Slaty Woodpeckers and Cinnamon-headed Bee-eaters. With some work we scoped a mixed flock and saw Ruby-throated Bulbul and Ruby-cheeked Sunbird. Two species of green pigeons were active, Orange-breasted and Gray-cheeked. We tried for some time to call in a Javan Blue Flycatcher, but had to be content with a more cooperative Blue-naped Monarch which perched above the road. Long-tailed Macaque troops were active throughout the area.

A highlight of the morning was our visit to a hide maintained by park rangers not far from the savannah site. We got set up with cameras and they put out some feed (at a time that birds expected it) and the first to come in was Black-capped Babbler. This beautifully marked bird hopped around on the ground and a picturesque log staged there and in time it was joined by a Horsfield's Babbler which seemed more interested in bathing than in feeding. It was nice to compare the two but when the star of the show came in, with its day-glow headlights and bright pattern, we were mesmerized by the star power of Javan Banded-Pitta. It hopped in and then up on the log, looking all around as we snapped photos and took video. Suddenly though, there was a big crash and our bench collapsed – too many fruit smoothies! Birds flew and people dropped, thankfully no cameras or limbs were in the way and we were able to continue to watch on portable chairs. Birding is always an adventure!

Back to pack up and head on our way – new terrain to explore. We had fun watching street life as we drove up in elevation, happy to embrace cooler temperatures. We settled into our spacious, modern rooms with an afternoon break to reorganize. Laundry was on our minds, charging appliances, a tour's chores of life.

Then up the mountain we went. At one point on the road you can see across the straits to Bali. Then it was into a tunnel of green, the Injen Crater Reserve, a part of the Belambangan Biosphere Reserve in East Java, along with



Alas Purwo and Baluran National Parks. The forest feels ancient, with plentiful tree ferns, abundant mosses and epiphytes and towering trees. We made numerous stops, one in a small clearing where we could get away from road noise. We got clear scope views of Grey-and-buff Woodpecker, a female intent on feeding. White-bellied Fantail, an endemic, gave us reasonable views. Birding was overall quiet, so we finished the afternoon with a field cup of tea and biscuits.

Home to glorious showers! The resort had two restaurants and we chose the more casual Resto and Bar. They appeared to have gin and other spirits, but these turned out to be just decoration; we were content to have beer and wine. Best of all, they had pizza with really good crust and spaghetti. We were all ready for a change of menu and gobbled these up with glee.

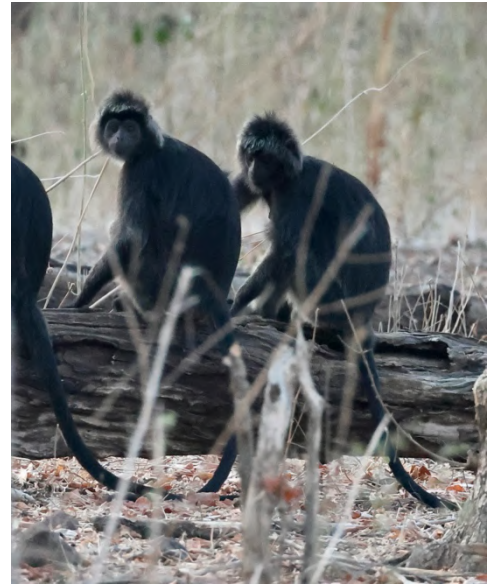
Mon., Sept. 23 Gunung Ijen Volcano

Gunung Ijen Crater is recognized as the centerpiece of this UNESCO Global Geopark, having last erupted in 1999. We spent all day birding at Gunung Ijen, an important biodiversity area which has emerged in the last few years as one of the prime locations for finding some of the Javan endemics.

We had an early start, 5 AM, so we could be up the mountain and in one of the bird hides, quietly seated on little chairs hidden from view, with hopes to see furtive Gray-breasted Partridge. Success! A lone bird came in not long after we assembled. It did not linger long, and though two different groups called during our time hidden inside, no others ventured near the hide. We did have a visit from a pair of Snowy-browed Flycatchers, and excellent views of Sunda Thrush. The light was good for photography and continued to be when we emerged to do more road-based scanning.

We drove to the top of the road pass for a pit stop, and found it to be buzzing with activity, as it had a campground and trailheads for two volcanoes. Gunung Ijen is popular for its large crater lake, the most acidic lake in the world accessed by a rigorous climb for trekkers. This was not on our agenda; we birded the trailhead area, but people watching was fun and it provided us with a pitstop. We dipped on seeing Javan Scimitar-Babbler at the edge of a shrubby clearing, but enjoyed seeing the little glamping huts set up with a view here.

Heading back down the road, our guides had a nice surprise for us. They set up chairs, then put worms out in a



small clearing under the arching canopy of a shrub. Then they called another endemic, Javan Bush Warbler, a bird very difficult to see. Voila! It made several passes through to our delight. The grand finale of this day was finding a pair of Orange-breasted Trogons. Such color and beauty!

Back for lunch, a break, which three of the group extended to the full afternoon. The other three silly ones ventured out with our full coterie of guides to sit in the hide, in the rain. Light levels were low, but Javan Banded Pitta, Whistling Thrush, and Snowy-browed Flycatcher came in for visits.

Tues., Sept. 24 Gunung Ijen | Baluran National Park

We spent the morning back in the park, taking advantage of bird and mammal activity at the start of the day.

After lunch, we drove to Baluran National Park, about an hour and a half away, tucked up into the northeast corner of Java. The park's centerpiece is 4000 ft. Mt. Baluran, an extinct volcano. This area was first protected by the Dutch in 1928, elevated to a game reserve in 1937, and managed as a national park since 1980. It was so different from anywhere we had been and is referred to as the Africa of Indonesia.

A guest house was our base here, clean and comfortable with the only glitch being some odd bathroom arrangements with a huge water tank for bathing by bucket (popular with locals and similar to spas in Japan) but no sink. Travel always brings adventures. The manager was very hospitable, and we had AC, Wi-Fi and comfortable beds. After a rest break we headed out, entering the park and traveling through a tunnel of dry forest, with massive acacia and other trees, most devoid of leaves. We saw Green Junglefowl right away, Green Peafowl, Water Buffalo, Rusa Deer, Long-tailed Macaques, and a Crested Serpent Eagle that made wonderful circles above us in the sky. We scanned an area of *Corphy* palms, where Green Imperial Pigeons were gobbling up fruits, and then to our huge satisfaction we saw first in flight, then a pair working a big palm tree bole, Java Flameback. This is a big and showy woodpecker, quite loud, which let us follow its short flights between feeding trees. They were fairly distant but in the scope their colors shone. We returned to the open area to find another prize, a migratory species, the Oriental Plover, similar to the Caspian Plover and preferring uplands with open grass. We found several and trained the scope on them. The animals were heading to two waterholes to drink by now, at day's end, and we headed that way too. A male Green Peafowl was dazzling at the back edge of one pool, shining in golden light. We were about packed up to go when one of the guides spied a Spotted Wood Owl, wow! We called back to it, and it flew tree to tree, eventually landing in one so we could get the scope on it for very



good views. Phil got a good digiscope image working with our guides, who have real skills in this technique. Time to call it a night.

We stopped at a restaurant in town, and they brought us platters and platters of food, barbecue chicken, various rice and veggies, and French fries. George reminded us that the ketchup was blended with chilis, as this seemed to be a nightly appetizer, good to know! Our bird list was now over 250 species and we were still on a roll. We were excited to make the move to Bali tomorrow afternoon and went over some of the specialties of this last of our three islands on the main tour.

Wed., Sept. 25 Baluran National Park | On to Bali

Morning light was lovely in the dry forest. We made a stop where a side road took off towards a ranger station, and really enjoyed seeing quite a variety of species, many of them new. We saw White-winged Triller, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Ornate Sunbirds, Red-cheeked Parakeets, Javan Cuckooshrike and another Javan Flameback. Haru had a surprise in store for us, asking “Did we want to photograph a Wreath ed Hornbill”? Certainly yes, we trotted along behind him up to the ranger station where he called across the field. Out came the ranger, and following him up the trail was a habituated Wreathed Hornbill that had been rescued from the pet trade. It lived outside and fed naturally, but returned to the station each night for safety. This species is more typical of the foothills, but the hope is that a group will come down seasonally and perhaps tempt it away. We got to enjoy it perched above us in the trees, and Deb said, “I’ve got its eyelashes” with delight. The face of this species is memorable, and to see it so close pretty special.

But our hornbill fun was not over. Our next stop was the beach, and in the cool shade they set up chairs for us by a waterhole. A pack of Eurasian Wild Boar came down to drink, and several Sooty-headed Bulbuls. Cinereous Tits were active in the trees adjacent along with an Olive-winged Bulbul. A Black Giant Squirrel was feeding on fig fruits, and overhead back and forth flew Oriental Pied Hornbill – so massive and striking in black and white. We stopped to view a palm where they were feeding and got some fine photo opportunities.

We headed to Bali today, the third major island of our adventures. We crossed the Bali Strait on a picture perfect day, on a comfortable ferry and a quick ride. Kay was in the front of the rail, leaning into the wind, so much



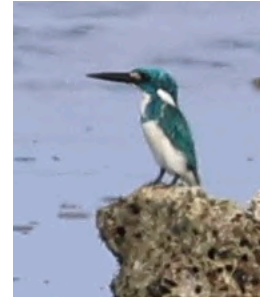
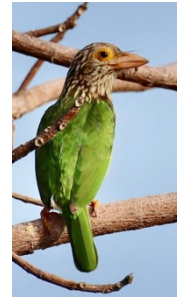
enjoying seeing all this geography. We spotted a few Black-naped Terns and enjoyed the fabulous scenery. How exciting to explore a new national park and landscape.

The same team of local guides and vehicle came with us; this was Boneng's home village, and we'd soon learn that he was instrumental in the restoration project to bring Bali Myna back from the brink of extinction. He worked with community members to halt the caged bird trade. It was great to be here with a local expert, as he knew where all the key species we wanted to see could be found, and we started the search that afternoon right off the ferry, visiting a local farm and open areas around it. The local cattle looked particularly healthy; Deb commented on their big eyes and alert faces as we walked by with scopes and cameras dangling. There we spotted Barred Buttonquail, often secretive, and Sunda Collared Dove, Javan Cuckooshrike, Lineated Barbet, and Black-winged Myna, a rare species. We then headed to the Bali Myna Release Site, part of an ongoing conservation project collaborative between locals and some major zoos that had captive populations. Prior to local involvement, restoration efforts were unsuccessful, but by building community awareness the population numbers are increasing. This pure white bird with cobalt blue eye markings is stunning, and to see them up close, listen to their calls, was just amazing. We visited at feeding time when the ranger put papaya hunks out on tree limbs, and they came in by the dozen. We gave the ranger a Naturalist Journeys cap he wore with a smile, and learned more about the project.

Our hotel was one of the favorites of the trip, a small boutique hotel with flowering Plumeria trees, a view of the mountains and a royal blue swimming pool as the centerpiece for our rooms.

Thurs., Sept. 26 Bali Barat National Park

Early this morning we headed into the dry forests of Bali Barat National Park, the largest national park in Bali covering about 5% of the island with Mount Kelatakan being the highest peak at almost 3000 feet. This park has been described as the Africa of Indonesia, and we did enjoy birding out in the open, out of dense forests, with wide views of a beautiful mountain. We left early as we did every day, a strategy to beat the heat, rewarded with a mid-day break. We went to two different bird hides, getting most-memorable views of Javan Banded Pitta, Hair-crested Drongo (Javan), Horsfield's Babbler, and Olive-backed Tailorbird. We also walked around a hot dry field, where in amazement Boneng showed us two day-roosting Savannah Nightjars. They blended in with perfection!



We took a break at our accommodations during the heat of the day, enjoying time for a swim or a nap. In the afternoon we did something completely different and fun; we went to some salt pans where locals owned small plots and harvested the salt at the edge of the sea. We walked out on the beach to scope for Javan Plover, Malaysian Plover, Greater Sand and Siberian Plovers and a host of other species. Terek Sandpipers with their upturned bills were new for many. In a back pond walking along dikes between the salt harvesting areas we found a beautiful Pied Stilt feeding in lovely fading light, with full reflections. There were half a dozen Sacred Kingfishers here and a couple of the smaller Little Blue (Cerulean) Kingfishers, all far away but we had good views in the scope. George commented on the weight of those buckets of wet salt being balanced on the shoulders of workers, two on each side of a pole. While they labored, we watched birds around them. In recognition, we shared a cold coke with one man who gave us a big smile in return.

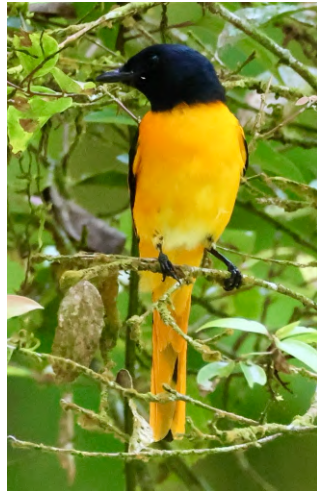
Back at the hotel we enjoyed dinner, catching up on our species list, and recounting the adventures of such a diverse and rewarding day. We all commented on how lucky we were to be able to venture so far and see such amazing wildlife.

Fri., Sept. 27 Bali Barat National Park | Bedugul | Bali Botanic Garden

We left early, wanting another chance to visit Bali Barat National Park, specifically one of the hides. We had missed Rufous-backed Dwarf Kingfisher at it yesterday, so thought by going there first we'd up our chances. A good hunch, and we were treated to it coming in fairly quickly. It perched on an arching branch, then dove into a small basin of water. With timing we could capture it splashing as it emerged or shaking water off as it reached the perch. It dove in repeatedly, then escaped still within view to a twiggy tangle where it preened at length. A big wow for everyone! Phil commented on the poor Javan Banded Pitta which had been the rock star but today barely got any attention.

We visited another patch of forest along a trail to a waterfall this morning and got sightings of Banded Bay Cuckoo, glimpses of stunning but elusive Black-naped Fruit Doves, Small Minivet and Gray-rumped Treeswift. Our patient guides and drivers could see we were wearing down and pulled out some very comfortable camp chairs and cold drinks for a refresh, for which we were thankful!

We had lunch en route to our next spot, at a restaurant overlooking the ocean. We arrived at the picturesque location of Bedugul and reveled in being back at higher elevation with a cool breeze and a stunning view to our golf resort accommodations. We had a traffic jam en route, so were a bit delayed, but still checked in, and headed next door to the Bali Botanical Gardens where we quickly found Black-backed Fruit-Dove, Flame-fronted Barbet,



Mountain Tailorbird, and near a small temple, frustratingly secretive Javan Scimitar-Babblers. By far the highlight was walking down a road through towering trees arching over us, and being successful in drawing in a calling Javan Owlet. It was curious and flew in overhead, yet it still took all of us searching until Boneng called out, “Got it!” with excitement. Nick Upton is incredibly adept and quick with a scope in these thick Asian forests, and we were able to feast our eyes and even get some photos of this little gem.

Sat., Sept. 28 Bedugul | Kuta Beach, Bali

We returned this morning to the botanical gardens, taking time to get some photos of Buddhist statues and some of the colorful flower plantings. We got to watch Blood-breasted Flowerpecker, Fulvous-chested Jungle Flycatcher (a real stretch for this tiny bird in the tallest of trees), Javan Bush Warbler, and Mountain Leaf Warbler. Both Cathy and Phil finally got GOOD looks at Javan Gray-throated White-eyes, often the core species of mixed flocks so something we’d call out and then get distracted from. Everyone enjoyed some Scarlet Minivets that came in close and got our cameras clicking.

It was then time to check out of the resort and drive a few hours to the tourist hotspot of Kuta Beach, close to the airport. We worried about traffic due to our traffic jam going into the golf resort, but had smooth sailing and got there by 4PM. This is a busy area, with loads of tourists and a beach with restaurants, and waves for surfers and swimmers to enjoy. There are shops across from the hotel, and a nice pool, so time went quickly before we met for our final celebratory dinner to share highlights of our wonderful Indonesian trip. The highlights were so many, it was tough to sort them through. Memorable moments included the Sunda Minivet explosion where they were feeding all around us in high trees, just after our victorious Blue Nuthatch find by persistent Nick. The wild feel of Way Kambas National Park where we were often away from traffic in pristine forest, surprised by rare species of all kinds such as the Storm’s Storks that flew overhead. The night drive at Way Kambas seeing a Marbled Cat. The boat trip there with bee-eaters at close range and three species of hornbill overhead. Seeing both species of colorful pittas made almost everyone’s bird highlight list. The Javan Frogmouth on its nest, the Crimson-winged Woodpecker pair seen on a boardwalk trail as we returned from our mountain hike, the massive Oriental Pied Hornbills feeding on fruits near the coast in East Java, boating by close to a hundred Christmas Island Frigatebirds, the intricate beauty and color of Javan Trogon right over our heads, a pair of Bat Hawks preening in the sun on the limb of a several-hundred year old tree. All the primates we saw, meeting high school girls that wanted to talk to us in our twin homes at the botanic gardens, the skill of all of our guides... We all agreed this was an epic adventure, hard birding that took patience and skill but with ample rewards. We will all remember that little



Rufous-backed Dwarf Kingfisher, our first sighting after diligent searching in Sumatra, then later to see it so close from our hidden perches inside a bird hide as it bathed and preened. There is so much that goes on behind the scenes to make such birding adventures possible and we hope our presence encourages locals to continue to preserve these splendid creatures!

Sun., Sept. 29 Departures | Flores Island Extension

A last morning for the main trip. We made one more early morning visit to the botanic gardens ahead of leaving, picking up good views of a few more species. Then it was time to pack up and head to flights home, or to the extension. Kay and George were staying on in Bali to enjoy some cultural sites, with art, music and dancing. Phil headed home to North Carolina, more than a bit concerned about recent dramatic flooding, so we were grateful to get his “made it home” message in time.

Our flock was dispersing, but four of us and our local guide continued on. Nick, Peg, Ramon, Cathy and Deb headed on to Flores; an hour and a half flight took us to Flores Island, crossing the Wallace’s Line, famous among biologists as a dividing line for flora and fauna from Australia and Asia.

Flores Island: Komodo Dragon and Endemic Birds Post-Tour Extension

Sun., Sept. 29 Denpasar | Labuan Bajo on Flores | Lesser Sunda Islands

We had an early breakfast at the hotel and headed to the airport, catching a morning flight from Denpasar in Bali to Labuan Bajo in the East Nusa Tenggara Province. As Indonesia emerged out of the pandemic, Labuan Bajo’s Komodo International Airport was one of five areas to be upgraded for tourism, with new infrastructure to support the significance of tourism for nature and culture. This is the closest airport to Komodo National Park, a launching area for snorkel and scuba trips among the islands, and a great place for us to enjoy the ocean, some R and R and time to see new birds as well as this bucket-list venomous lizard. We had three nights at a delightful oceanfront hotel, with open-air patio dining, a view of boats coming and going, a beach to walk and a pool to enjoy.



Roman came across with us and was joined by local guide Max, an expert for the Lesser Sundas. We started off birding at a local fish farm, largely abandoned but still providing an oasis for birds. We saw both Stork-billed and Common Kingfisher, a variety of shorebirds, and several smaller birds like Rusty-breasted Whistler, Black-fronted Flowerpecker, and Zebra Finch.

We checked into our oceanside lodgings and had a nice lunch out by the pool. Later in the afternoon we drove into the surrounding hills to look for Flores endemics and other species. We jumped right in, going to a local tree farm and horticultural site where we had good views of Flores Crow, Great-billed Parrots flying over, and Rainbow Bee-eater. Our drivers brought some cold drinks and snacks, and comfortable stools, so we could stay out to look for Moluccan Scops Owl and Mee's Nightjar. We had success finding both – off to a great start!

Mon., Sept. 30 Puarlolo | Beach Walk

We had an early breakfast and headed up higher into the mountains today. We stopped near a pass with a huge cell phone tower, and watched as light framed the trees and Red-cheeked Parrots passed overhead. We got the scope on Black-naped Fruit Pigeon and had fly-by visits of Barred Cuckoo Dove. Our guides worked hard to show us secretive White-rumped Kingfisher, a large forest species. We also found photo views of Ornate Pitta, a treat. One of the more difficult species we had quick views of was Chestnut-capped Thrush, like so many species here rare due to the strong cultural tradition of trapping birds for cages. Alongside the road flowering shrubs attracted smaller birds and we sorted through several species of white-eyes, and got views of a real beauty, the Flame-breasted Sunbird. In the deep forest, we found Flores Monarch and with some diligence amid lots of tangles, all got a view. On the way down we checked a tree and found feeding Leaf Lorikeets in it, another specialty of the area we would never find without talented local guides.

We returned for lunch on the patio, looking at the turquoise water and scenery just so relaxing after our forest slog. It was hot and humid, so breezes here felt really good, as did a bit of AC with a nap, or a dip in the pool.

In the afternoon Nick wisely thought we deserved a change from deep forest birding, and we had a delightful walk down the beach, observing 30 species including Pacific Reef Heron, Pacific Black Duck, Pacific Golden Plover, Javan Plover, many Whimbrel, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, lovely Black-naped Monarchs, an Osprey and several Ornate Sunbirds. Deb had wanted to photograph kingfishers, and this afternoon she hit the jackpot, with a very tolerant Sacred Kingfisher posing at the edge of the mangroves.



Dinner was back at the hotel and our wait staff by now knew what we liked to eat and drink. Cold beer hit the spot after our adventures, and we had a good selection of entrees.

Tues., Oct. 1 Labuan Bajo | Komodo Island

We all were excited for this day, a chance to see Komodo Dragons, almost mythical creatures we'd known about since childhood. Their stronghold is a series of islands that have core areas to protect them – Komodo and Rinca Islands having the highest numbers. The park has a trail set up into the arid forest habitat they thrive in on Komodo Island. We traveled by speedboat, a private boat for our group, about an hour and a half to Komodo Island. The ocean was pretty gentle, and we loved the fresh air and scenery. We saw a few Great Crested Tern, but the highlight was seeing a cliffside nesting family of White-bellied Sea Eagles, two adults and two fledged juveniles still begging for food.

We walked down the long pier under which Striated Swallows flew at close range and under the sign welcoming us to Komodo National Park – great stop for a group photo. A local guide was assigned to our group, mandatory and providing employment to the local village (about 2000 inhabitants).

We spent the full morning on the island to see the famous Komodo Dragons, as well as some birds, notably the critically endangered Yellow-crested Cockatoo. We got close to Black-naped Oriole and Wallacean Drongos but soon turned our attention to focus on the island's famous charismatic reptiles. The first Komodo Dragon we saw was a young one, about three years old. Our guide described it as just down from the trees, where dragons spend their first few years to keep safe from predation from larger, older dragons. At a water hole, we encountered a teen-ager, drinking voraciously and moving about logs and rocks around the site. A large one arrived in the company of a group of tourists less versed in wildlife etiquette, but we kept our patience and we soon were there by ourselves with this big monster. We watched it drink, then move off into the shade where it rested, almost motionless other than to keep us in view, turning its head back and forth. Cathy compared its arching neck when drinking to that of a Galapagos Tortoise. Peg felt its resting hulk was not unlike an Elephant Seal (this one had a big full belly), and when prone it looked like an alligator. Surely one of nature's oddest creatures, living in a marginal, arid realm.

Their feet are huge, with wicked looking claws. We watched one with dripping saliva, which Nick said was an iconic photo to grab to depict their deadly status, as this saliva contained the venom that could kill a much larger mammal. We learned about their life histories, but it was rounding a corner of the trail to find four of them down in a ditch, wrestling over the rib cage, shoulders and head of a Wild Boar that made us feel we'd hit the jackpot on



understanding them. The big individual, at least twenty years old, ripped off the head and upper rib cage and dragged it up the hill to eat on its own. The younger ones grabbed meat off the rest of the bones, gulping it down with gusto.

We had a cold drink, bought some T-shirts made in the local village, returned to Lubuan Bajo, arriving for a late lunch back at the hotel. We saw a couple of Lesser Frigatebirds around a small group of islands.

After such a grand adventure, two of our team decided to just chill and enjoy the beachfront hotel and some down time. Peg and Nick went out with the guides, checking some low elevation sites for munias and other small species. A Pied Bush Chat was the only new species but it was still fun to be out finding what we could.

Our hotel had good Wi-Fi, so it was nice to be able to post our photos of Komodo Dragons to share the experience with friends in almost real time. Dinner was at the hotel where they had a nice selection to choose from. But this was no ordinary dinner, as it was Deb's birthday so we had cause to celebrate. We chose some local wine (grapes from Australia but vinted in Indonesia) and Max had a friend that made a special cake. The hotel staff we'd enjoyed so much came out singing and Deb had a big smile as she blew out the candles. A birthday in such a remote place, with Komodo Dragons – wow!

Wed., Oct. 2 Labuan Bajo | Denpasar | Bali

We had a great last full morning, the undisputed highlight being views of one of the loveliest species of the archipelago – Blyth's Paradise-Flycatcher. Cathy gasped when she got her eyes on this beauty. It was in deep woods, but quite actively feeding so we had multiple chances to see its gorgeous white tail. It was thrilling to find such a beauty on our last morning. The woods were generally quiet, so we decided to return to some wet rice fields that had seeding plants, and there we had three species of munias whirling around: Pale-headed, Scaly-breasted and Black-faced. Two Blue-tailed Bee-eaters sallied out from bamboo sticks to feed, and we had fun trying to capture flight photographs. A Lesser Coucal made a pass through. We had to keep an eye on time with an early-afternoon flight, or we might still be there!

We had a last lunch at this hotel we enjoyed so much before an afternoon flight back to Bali. Everything went smoothly; Don, who had been our driver before, was there to pick us up, and we had the rest of the afternoon to swim, pack and get ready to travel.



Dinner was lively; this was a larger hotel with music and entertainment, and we chose to sit on the Balinese side and enjoy a last Indonesian food meal and watch the dancing. Our bird list had swelled to 339 species, wow! Each had its own story and some were truly magical.

Thurs., Oct. 3 Bali | Departures

We loved this grand adventure, but after 21 days of early rising, a morning to sleep in felt delicious. We met for breakfast, then repacked and got ready for the long flight home. Until the next adventure!

Photos: Bali Myna (Debbie Hall - DH), Black-naped Oriole (Debbie Hall - DH), Wreathed Hornbill (Mary Kay Simmons - MS), Javan Trogon (MS), Sunda Frogmouth (Phil Weinrich - PW), Banded Kingfisher (MS), Javan Banded-Pitta (PW), Siamang (PW), Slow Loris (PW), Red Junglefowl (MS), Dusky Broadbill (MS), Green Broadbill (MS), Marbled Cat (MS), Blue-throated Bee-eater (Peg Abbott - PA), Prevost's Squirrel (DH), Malayan Crested Fireback (MS), Lunch (PA), Delicious Meal (PA), Exploring Way Kambas National Park (PA), Elephant Reserve (MS), Purple heron (MS), Christmas Island Frigatebird (PA), Common Tern (PA), Jakarta Bay fishing boats (MS), Urban birding (DH), Javan Trogon (PA). Little Pied Flycatcher (PA), Tea Plantation (PA), Finding Volcano Swiftlets (MS), Raptor Lookout (MS), Scenic (PA), Group Birding (PA), National Park Scenic (PA), Purple Flowers (PA), Long-tailed Macaque (MS), Bhutan Cypress (MS), Banteng (wild bovine) and Javan rusa (deer) (MS), Gray-cheeked Green-Pigeon (MS), Greater Coucal (MS), Green Peafowl (MS), Javan Banda-Pitta (MS), Black-naped Monarch (MS), Black-thighed Falconet (MS), Javan Black-capped Babbler (MS), Gray-breasted Partridge (MS), Group Birding (MS), Javan Gray-throated White-Eye (MS), Butterfly (DH), Javan Whistling-Thrush (MS), Ebony Leaf Monkey (MS), Sunda Minivet (MS), Aberrant Bush Warbler (MS), Bali Myna (MS), Green Junglefowl (MS), Wreathed Hornbill (MS), Oriental Pied-Hornbill (MS), Heru (guide) and Peg Abbott (MS), Balli statue by ferry landing (MS), Bali Myna (DH), Javan Banded Pitta (MS), Small Blue (Cerulean) Kingfisher (MS), Statue (PA), Statue (MS), Olive-backed Sunbird (DH), Sacred Kingfisher (DH), White-bellied Sea Eagle (DH), Komodo Dragon (DH), Blue-tailed Bee-eater (DH), Blue-throated Bee-eater (DH), Brahminy Kite (DH), Macaque lunch break (DH)