



This fantastic male Palawan Peacock Pheasant saved one of his last performances, that spanned almost 20 years, for us! (Pete Morris)

CLASSIC PHILIPPINES

20 JANUARY – 11 FEBRUARY 2019

LEADERS: PETE MORRIS and JULIEN MAZENAUER

Having operated a long series of successful Philippines tours over the last three decades it was once again time to reorganize the tours. With so much to see in the Philippines we decided to return once again to the two tour strategy, with this tour and the Remote Philippines which concentrates on some of the smaller islands and their associated endemics. This, our Classic Philippines tour, cherry picks its way around the three main islands of Luzon, Mindanao and Palawan, scoring heavily on both numbers of endemics and the proportion of 'signature' birds seen. As such, it is the recommended



The nightbirding was fantastic as typified by this brilliant Philippine Frogmouth at Mt Kitanglad (Pete Morris)

tour for those only intending to visit this fascinating archipelago once. Sadly, habitat destruction continues at pace in this already critically-threatened country; a visit sooner rather than later is recommended!

During our more-or-less three weeks, we recorded a grand total of just under 340 species, a good total for the tour, and more importantly we scored a high proportion of the 'diamond' birds - those highly desired species. Some of those iconic birds that we drooled over included the must-see Philippine Eagle, Palawan Peacock-Pheasant and Azure-breasted Pitta. Our success rate with the endemic targets overall was very good indeed, and special mention on this tour should go to the 12 species of owl seen (including Philippine Eagle-Owls near to Manila and impressive Giant Scops Owls), the amazing Flame-breasted Fruit-Dove, 11 stunning species of kingfishers and three gorgeous species of pitta. Individual species that stand out were the brilliant Japanese Night Heron, delightful



Two endemic stunners: Azure-breasted Pitta and Scale-feathered Malkoha (Pete Morris)



A stunning pair of Mantanani Scops Owls from Palawan (Pete Morris)

and strange Philippine and Palawan Frogmouths, huge Rufous and Writhed Hornbills (amongst the five species of endemic hornbills possible on this route!), weird Scale-feathered and Rough-crested Malkohas, the rare Philippine Cockatoo, a stunning Ashy Ground Thrush, striking Elegant and Palawan Tits, sneaky Falcated and Streaked Wren-Babblers, Lina's and Apo Sunbirds, and stunning Red-eared Parrotfinches, to name just a few. As always the tour was action-packed, and as always, tinged with sadness, as there was no doubt that some of these superb birds are quite literally disappearing in front of our eyes. Nowhere else in the world is home to so many stunning endemics that are so heavily under pressure!

We all met up in Manila early morning and headed straight for Candaba Marshes, an increasingly small patch of wetlands sat in the middle of huge areas of agriculture. A small nature reserve has been established in the former swamp and is a bit of a haven for birds now that almost the entire area has been converted to rice paddies, though the generally dry conditions led to little open water being visible. The pools were a little quieter than usual, though we did eventually find a few Philippine Ducks as well as the rare Philippine Swamphen. Numerous Middendorff's Grasshopper Warblers and Oriental Reed Warblers played hide and seek with us, and other interesting species included a couple of Garganey, Yellow, Cinnamon and Black Bitterns, numerous Purple Herons, an Eastern Marsh Harrier, White-browed Crakes, Long-toed Stints, huge numbers of Red Turtle Doves, Golden-bellied Gerygones, Pied Trillers, Brown and Long-tailed Shrikes, Oriental Skylarks and the endemic Philippine Pied Fantail. We then made our way on to Subic Bay, pausing for lunch along the way, before checking into our hotel.

Quite a bit of decent forest remains around the old US base and the forest is now recovering well from the devastation caused by the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in 1991, and more understorey and midstorey is developing. Accessing the best areas is far from straightforward though, as we found out, though once we promised to abide by a long series of rules, we were permitted!! We had the afternoon, a day and an early morning to explore this productive area, and although slow at times, we pulled some good birds out of the bag. Of course, being the Philippines, nightbirding was on the agenda, and during a few blunders in the dark, we managed sensational views of Chocolate Boobook and Luzon Hawk Owl and, after a bit of a struggle, a cute family of Philippine Scops Owls!



Nightbirds from Subic Bay: a pair of Luzon Hawk-Owls; a fine Chocolate Boobook and a cute juvenile Philippine Scops Owl (Pete Morris)





A few from Subic Bay: a fine White-bellied Woodpecker, Blackish Cuckooshrike and the scarce White-lored Oriole(Pete Morris)

During the day time, we had a series of endemics and other interesting species to track down, and these included sneaky groups of Rufous Coucals and Rough-crested Malkohas clambering through the bamboo, the diminutive Philippine Falconet, the endemic Brown-breasted (White-throated) Kingfisher, Luzon Hornbill, the impressive Luzon Flameback, (Northern) Sooty and White-bellied Woodpeckers, the tiny Philippine Pygmy Woodpecker, endemic Philippine Green Pigeons, the rare Blue-naped Parrot, colourful but speedy Guaiaberos and Philippine Hanging Parrots, smart Whiskered Treeswifts, speedy flocks of Ashy Minivets, Blackish and Bar-bellied Cuckooshrikes, Trilling Tailorbird, Philippine Bulbuls, smart Elegant Tits, a couple of sneaky but ultimately showy, musical White-browed Shamans, Coleto and the canopy-loving Stripe-headed Rhabdornis. We also eventually tracked several sneaky Green Racket-Tails and an obliging White-lored Oriole, and a showy Philippine Hawk-Eagle was a definite bonus!

After a pretty successful visit, it was then time to pack-up and head on, and we made the long and relatively uneventful drive north to Banaue. A couple of Java Sparrows were a surprise at one stop along the way, and a lovely pair of Indigo-banded Kingfishers gave some good scope views as we approached our destination.

We had a couple of days to explore Banaue and its surroundings, concentrating much of our time in the remnant forest patches along the road at Mount Polis. Sadly, most of the forest by the road has been heavily degraded over the years, and those that have converted it to agriculture are sometimes avid hunters, though thankfully we saw less evidence of that this time! The two facts combined, have not made the birding any easier over the years, but we fared pretty well. We began with a bang, well, an explosion actually! Despite the mizzly conditions, the very first bird we saw was the cutest of cute Luzon Scops Owl, which was followed by some brilliant and showy Flame-breasted Fruit Doves. We then had a Montane Racket-Tail screeching overhead! It doesn't get much better than that! During our visit, new species came thick and fast as we admired mixed flocks with Chestnut-faced Babblers, Turquoise Flycatchers, Blue-headed Fantails, Negros Leaf Warblers, Mountain Tailorbirds, Warbling (formerly Mountain) White-eyes, the scarce Green-backed Whistler, colourful Philippine (Scarlet) Minivets, attractive Luzon Sunbirds and a superb male Flame-crowned Flowerpecker. A pair of



Three of the stars from Mt Polis... Luzon Scops Owl, Flame-breasted Fruit Dove and Mountain Shrike. (Pete Morris)



Mountain Shrikes was seen very well, Luzon Bush-Warblers were teased from the undergrowth, and a couple of long sessions resulted in great views of Long-tailed Bush Warblers and White-browed Shortwings. We were also surprised and delighted to find a Tawny-breasted Parrotfinch foraging in the bamboo, though it proved tough to track down for more than a few seconds at a time! Around the edges of the fields we found a fine male Brown-headed Thrush and Island Thrushes, several Olive-backed Pipits and some Tawny Grassbirds. Also particularly memorable was a fine adult Philippine Hawk-Eagle drifting by at virtually eye-level!

We also made a couple of excursions a little further down the road. Here, we saw a few Philippine Serpent Eagles, Elegant Tits, Sulphur-billed Nuthatches, our first Bundok Flycatchers, some smart

White-cheeked Bullfinches, some flyover Red Crossbills and a couple of other specialities, the ultra-skulking Benguet Bush-Warbler and the much-wanted Luzon Water-Redstart. In the afternoons, we spent some time around the hotel where groups of endemic Yellowish White-eyes showed well in the small mixed flocks led by Elegant Tits, and some amazing Scale-feathered Malkohas put on a performance!

After a successful visit, we set off early for the long journey back to Manila. We tried not to stop too much for we had a plan up our sleeve, though a pause at the famous Dalton Pass gave us a few species including our first endemic Handsome Sunbird of the tour. By the late afternoon we arrived at Angono, but no owls were on show. There was no option but to wait until dusk... And boy were we glad we did! Just as the sun had set, one of the highlights of the tour, a brilliant adult Philippine Eagle Owl peered down at us from the canopy. An amazing bird, that in many ways resembles a fish owl more than an eagle owl! And if that wasn't enough, we then found Philippine Nightjar and a surprise Philippine Frogmouth, all in a mad fifteen minutes!



The imposing Philippine Eagle-Owl and a surprise Philippine Frogmouth at Angono (Pete Morris)

An early start saw us back at Manila Airport for our flight to Cagayan de Oro. It needn't have been that early for the flight was delayed by two hours, and as a result, it took most of the day to get to Mount Kitanglad. We got to our parking area in rather grim and wet weather, and boarded a couple of rickety four wheel drives to (eventually) get us up to the start point for our walk. With the rain easing, that two hour delay seemed more of a good thing by now, and we embarked upon the somewhat muddy walk up to the camp, arriving just after dark, bedraggled, tired and relieved! The San Miguels and Tanduay Rum tasted good that evening!

Fortunately the weather cleared, and we had three days to 'enjoy' the remnant forest on the mountain. Other than the endless mud, and slippery-slidey trails, conditions were not too bad! Our main target was of course the holy grail, the monkey-eating Philippine Eagle, and our first day saw us strategically positioned, scanning, and scanning, and scanning and... After what seemed like an age, the shout went out, and there was the unmistakable shape of our quarry. Over the next hour or so we watched the eagle come and go, some great scope views both flying and perched somewhat distantly. And then, there were two! Initially both perched, the two got up together and began display-



The much-wanted Giant Scops Owl and a composite of the Bukidnon Woodcock by the camp at Mt Kitanglad (Pete Morris)



ing, culminating in some amazing talon-grappling, where the two birds spiralled down towards the canopy like a giant sycamore seed! Smiles, delight, relief... many emotions were released, and we were able to get on and look for the other endemics of the mountain.

As is the norm in the Philippines, the nightbirding was important, and thankfully our several attempts proved successful. At dusk, Bukidnon Woodcocks were watched roding, giving many great views as they uttered their distinctive calls. Philippine Nightjars were present for company, and after dark, another set of critters emerged. A magnificent Philippine Frogmouth posed, revealing its bizarre eyes,



A cute Everett's Scops Owl from Mt Kitanglad (Pete Morris)

whilst diligent searching led to multiple sightings of the much-wanted Giant Scops Owl, with great looks for all, and an intimate encounter with an endearing Everett's Scops Owl. Sadly the Mindanao Scops Owl calling far away seemed to be unreachable.

Around the camp, numerous species entertained. Mindanao Hornbills called and flew back and forth, Purple Needletails raced overhead, some smart Yellow-breasted Fruit Doves posed, and Olive-capped and Bicolored Flowerpeckers and Cinnamon Ibons fed on tiny fruits. Mixed flocks near the camp held new endemics including Rufous-headed Tailorbird, delightful Black-and-cinnamon Fantails and Grey-hooded Sunbirds. Further up we found smart McGregor's Cuckooshrikes, an obliging Long-tailed Bush Warbler, the weird-looking Apo Myna, Short-tailed Starlings and flocks of Eye-browed Thrushes. It took a decent effort to find the endemic Apo Sunbird but we did so successfully, and other highlights included tree-top-loving Stripe-breasted Rhabdornises, a pallid male Bundok Flycatcher, a few Mugimaki Flycatchers, several Mindanao White-eyes and superb



Apo Myna and Stripe-breasted Rhabdornis liked the dead snags at Mt Kitanglad (Pete Morris)



An endemic Plain Bush-hen released from a snare at Mt Kitanglad. It had strong legs, I can assure you! (Julien Mazenauer)

White-cheeked Bullfinches, though noisy Mindanao Racket-tails, proved hard to track down. Crested Honey Buzzards (of the local long-necked subspecies) and Philippine Serpent Eagle were frequently overhead, and we also noted the endemic Philippine Swiftlet. We tried several times to lure out Plain Bush-hens, but literally had to snare one to see one, and the other species that took a lot of finding was the tiny and splendid Red-eared Parrotfinch. We eventually did find one that showed well, but the difficult viewing conditions led to not everyone seeing it...

After a final morning around the camp, we said goodbye to our fantastic hosts, and while they loaded the horses, we retraced our steps back down the hill. Still a muddy affair, but far easier than the slog up in the half light. A couple of migrant surprises brightened up the walk with good scope views of a Chestnut-cheeked Starling and an Oriental Cuckoo, and it was a pleasant experience being reunited with the vehicles, and continuing our journey south. We paused for lunch before arriving at our accommodation for the night, a pleasant resort on the outskirts of Davao. Later that afternoon we explored an adjacent area of forest, and here we soon hit the jackpot with a couple of highly desired Japanese Night Herons. These wonderful birds gave amazing views as they pulled up huge earthworms. The first immature bird attracted the attention of a Grey-faced Buzzard that rather fancied the look of its worm. The heron's reaction was classic, as it spiked its neck up like a cobra, to keep the buzzard at bay. The other, a pristine adult, posed at close range for walk away views! Wow, but the show wasn't over there. We still had time to add a confiding Cryptic Flycatcher and an Everett's Scops Owl for those that were asleep at the last showing, before settling in for another fine banquet.

We were up early of course, and soon had a one-eyed Giant Scops Owl fixed in our beam. We then made our way up the mountain to our next target, the diminutive Whiskered Flowerpecker which showed very well in the scope. Here we also found the distinctive and still-undescribed shortwing that I first discovered in Southern Mindanao way back in 1995. We were able to listen to its highly distinctive song, and, after a bit of effort, get some excellent views of the rather small and grey-looking male, hopping in the open on a bank. We then made it back for breakfast and had a last wander around near to our resort, finding our first Everett's White-eyes, numerous Red-keeled and Orange-bellied Flowerpeckers and the distinctive *juliae* form of Purple-rumped Sunbird.

By mid-morning it was time to make tracks and head towards Bislig. We made an extended stop along the coast to look for the Chinese Crested Terns which had been seen intermittently, but despite



The young Japanese Night Heron scaring off the Grey-faced Buzzard (Pete Morris) and the rare Cryptic Flycatcher (Julien Mazenauer)

some serious scanning through the thousands of Whiskered Terns and Black-headed Gulls, there was no sign! We did see a number of other interesting wetland species, and these included Javan Pond Herons, Pied Stilts, Pacific Golden, Lesser Sand and Greater Sand Plovers, Red-necked Stint, Curlew, Terek and Marsh Sandpipers, and Little, Gull-billed and Common Terns. A little dejected, we carried on our way, making it to our pleasant little hotel in Bislig in time for dinner, as usual in somewhat wet conditions!

The following three days and a morning were spent exploring the lowland forest (or what's left of it) in the former PICOP logging concession. I won't go on again about the state of the place, but there was far less habitat than on my previous visit, and suffice to say, time is running out for many of the birds there. The habitat destruction and intermittent heavy rain did not make for easy birding, but despite all of this, our efforts were rewarded with some great sightings. We were joined by my



Mindanao Hawk Owl and Philippine Trogon from PICOP (Pete Morris)



The stunning kingfishers of PICOP! Southern Silvery Kingfisher, Winchell's Kingfisher (below left) and Hombron's Kingfisher (Pete Morris)



good friend Zardo for the duration of our visit, and each day we would set off in the dark in our less than luxurious jeepneys! Of course there was a little more nightbirding to do, and we managed to get some great views of Mindanao Hawk Owl and another Everett's Scops Owl. Large frugivores were still hanging on, and we managed splendid views of Writhed and Mindanao Hornbills and a group of spectacular Rufous Hornbills with a youngster. A huge and increasingly rare Pink-bellied Imperial Pigeon was found sitting high on a snag, Philippine Drongo-Cuckoos sang, smart Black-faced Coucals clambered in the tree crowns and colourful Philippine Trogons delighted us, though even they seemed scarcer than before. We also enjoyed three star kingfishers! A stunning Southern Silvery Kingfisher gave great views at its pond, a fine Winchell's Kingfisher sang from the canopy, and a male Hombron's Kingfisher gave great views in the understory. In the few remnant patches of thicker forest we searched for more retiring species. Flocks held fantastic Short-crested Monarchs, superb Rufous Paradise-Flycatchers, attractive Mindanao Blue Fantails, Yellow-bellied Whistlers, Brown Tit-Babblers, Rusty-crowned and Mindanao Pygmy Babblers, and Philippine Leaf-Warblers, and on one occasion a Rufous-tailed Jungle Flycatcher. Of the tricky skulkers, a couple of pairs of Striated Wren-Babblers gave us the run-a-round, eventually showing well, a fine Azure-breasted Pitta posed at close range, and a fantastic Little Slaty Flycatcher sung its little heart out for us. Other endemics and good birds seen during our visit included an amazingly confiding Amethyst Brown Dove, Blue-crowned Racket-tails, Violet Cuckoo, Black-bibbed Cicadabird, Black-and-white Triller, Philippine Orioles, the elusive Philippine Leafbird, Philippine (Scarlet) Minivets, musical Yellowish



More PICOP magic! Our pet Amethyst Brown Dove, Mindanao Pygmy Babler and the rare Little Slaty Flycatcher (Pete Morris)



Bulbuls, cheeky Yellow-wattled Bulbuls, Rufous-fronted and Black-headed Tailorbirds, Mindanao and Grey-throated Sunbirds, more Handsome Sunbirds, Orange-tufted Spiderhunters, and Olive-backed and Striped Flowerpeckers. Overhead, several Philippine Needletails flashed by, and Philippine Honey Buzzards gave great views. We also made a visit to Bislig Airfield where we found stunning Eastern Grass Owls, as well as numerous Wandering Whistling Ducks, Middendorff's Grasshopper Warblers, Golden-headed Cisticolas and our only King Quails of the tour.

Leaving PICOP behind, we made the longish journey back towards Davao, but made a detour to a relatively new site the Compostela Valley, where we had an evening and a morning to explore the remnant



Writhed Hornbills, Philippine Spine-tailed Swifts (right) and Purple Needletails (Pete Morris)

roadside forest patches. Again, the weather was not overly kind to us, with frequent rain, mist and drizzle, but we soldiered on and found some fine birds. The frequent mixed flocks along the roadside held numerous colourful Lina's Sunbirds, our main reason for coming to the site. Numerous Mindanao White-eyes gave great views with the Cinnamon Ibons and Warbling White-eyes, Olive-capped Flowerpeckers proved numerous, another form of Negros Leaf Warbler showed well, and a rather interesting form of McGregor's Cuckooshrike, with the strangest of songs perplexed us. Island Thrushes hopped along the roadsides and we were delighted to see two rare Spotted Imperial Pigeons perched alongside a fine Metallic Woodpigeon, and a stunning Red-eared Parrotfinch gave everyone a chance to catch up with this fine species. Sadly, this was the site of our only nightbird failure as our attempts to lure a Mindanao Scops Owl into view from the precipitous slopes sadly failed! Oh well, you can't quite win them all! We left the site, dodging the motorcycles that carried seven or more people (!!!), and made another attempt to look for terns on the coast at Panabo. Sadly, we drew a blank again, but added more waders including Bar-tailed Godwit, Grey-tailed Tattler and more Terek Sandpipers. There then followed the journey back to Manila, another delayed flight courtesy of Cebu Pacific and a rather short night's sleep!



McGregor's Cuckooshrike and the attractive Lina's Sunbird at the Compostela Valley (Pete Morris)

A chaotic start to the morning saw us back at the airport in the wee small hours, boarding a ridiculously early flight to Puerto Princessa. Remarkably, all of us, and all of our bags made it there!! We wasted no time, and soon after first light we were birding the excellent Balsahan Trail at Iwahig. This is an excellent site for a few endemics that can be tricky to find elsewhere, and we set about finding these as priority. Easiest was the aptly-named Melodious Babbler that sang away from the bamboo thickets and was teased into view. The cute and tiny Palawan Flycatcher also gave brilliant looks, though the stunning but shy Falcated Wren Babbler put up more of a fight before succumbing to all. We also saw a host of other great birds. We began with numerous Blue-naped Parrots, and one of the first good birds we saw was a rare and highly-desired male Red-headed Flameback. Other new endemics logged during the morning included Spot-throated Flameback, the delightful Palawan Tit, Ashy-fronted and Palawan Bulbuls, and our first of several Yellow-throated Leafbirds, Palawan



The cute Palawan Flycatcher (Pete Morris)

Flowerpeckers, Lovely Sunbirds and Pale Spiderhunters, as well as the distinctive local forms of Slender-billed (Palawan) Crow, Asian (Palawan) Fairy Bluebird, both potential splits. We also logged a number of more widespread Asian species including Crested Serpent Eagle, Square-tailed Dron-go-Cuckoo, a shy Blue-eared Kingfisher in the scope, our first of several Oriental Dwarf Kingfishers, Fiery Minivet and Black-headed Bulbul. As we were leaving the site, we stopped at some mangroves where the attractive Copper-throated Sunbird showed well, and we popped into another area where we found a fine Chinese Egret, as well as our first Rufous-tailed Tailorbirds, endemic White-vented Shamas, and the attractive local race of Olive-backed Sunbird.

After lunch we made our way to Sabang, pausing at a viewpoint where the star of the show was the endangered Red-vented Cockatoo. Whilst looking we added Brown-backed Needletail and some noisy Palawan Hornbills, but by now the sun was beginning to slide. It had been a long day, and as a result, our attempted nightbirding was somewhat half-hearted, and although we heard some sounds, the only things visible were a stunning roosting Hooded Pitta and a roosting White-vented Shama. We'd been on the go long enough, so headed to our plush hotel for dinner and a rest.



More Palawan goodies! The rare Red-headed Flameback, Red-vented Cockatoo, Blue Paradise Flycatcher and Pale Spiderhunter (Pete Morris)





One of the friendly Tabon Scrubfowls in St Paul's National Park (Pete Morris)

Tension and anticipation reigned the following morning as we boarded our boat into St Paul's National Park to the Underground River and here we spent much time first searching for, and then admiring a superb male Palawan Peacock-Pheasant at close range. He really had become a complete star over the nearly 20 years he'd lived there, so a great relief, though somewhat sad to learn that we were one of the last groups to see him!! Also here were some Tabon Scrubfowl, and other species of interest included some cute Oriental Dwarf Kingfishers, sneaky Ashy-headed Babblers and Palawan Blue Flycatcher, as well as a Peregrine gobbling up swiftlets!

The rest of our time on Palawan was spent in various forest patches looking for the remaining endemics and specialties that we had not yet encountered, and gradually we tracked them down! The gorgeous Blue Paradise-Flycatcher was found alongside gaudy Black-chinned Fruit-Doves, amazing Great Slaty Woodpeckers flicked their huge wings as they made their way up impressive trunks, Blue-headed Racket-tails screeched over and paused for scope views, Chestnut-breasted Malkohas



A stunning Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher (Pete Morris)



Nightbirding on Palawan, with the stunning Palawan Scops Owl, the weird Palawan Frogmouth and the impressive Spotted Wood Owl (Pete Morris)



jumped through the canopy, stunning Philippine Pittas obliged, and a long vigil resulted in great looks at the often sneaky Sulphur-bellied Bulbul.

We also made a couple of very successful nocturnal excursions. The first saw us gain remarkable views of the much-wanted gruff-voiced Palawan Scops Owl and hairy-eared Palawan Frogmouth, as well as a really stunning Spotted Wood Owl. Our other nightbirding required a short boat ride in order to get to a fabulous pair of Mantanani Scops Owl, that performed on cue at dusk.



More joy on Palawan! Hooded Pitta, a fine Black-chinned Fruit-Dove and an immature Philippine Pitta (Pete Morris)





Some birds from Mt Makiling: (Clockwise from above) *Rough-crested Malkoha*, a bedraggled *Spotted Wood Kingfisher* and *Spotted Imperial Pigeon* (Pete Morris), and the rare and seldom seen *Ashy-breasted Flycatcher* (Julien Mazanauer)



With Palawan ‘done’, we once again flew back to Manila, and made our way south to Mt Makiling, via a lengthier than planned lunch stop! We got to Mt Makiling in time to explore some open areas around Los Banos. Indeed we had two sessions to look for the endemic Spotted Buttonquail, eventually all getting good scope views of this sometimes elusive species. Also here was a Plain Bush-hen (not tethered!), numerous Swinhoe’s Snipes, our showiest Rough-crested Malkohas and Philippine Coucals, and a couple of new endemics, namely the recently split Philippine Magpie Robin and a flock of Lowland White-eyes.

Well the weather gods were hardly smiling on us for our jeepney trip up Mt Makiling! Indeed it barely stopped raining, and although we found a fine, if somewhat bedraggled, male Spotted Wood Kingfisher, it really was not weather conducive to birding! We retired for an early lunch and then spent the afternoon in the botanical gardens before our second buttonquail vigil. This proved to be a good move as we found some real quality birds in the gardens. Not just the hoped for endemic Flaming Sunbird, but a huge surprise in the shape of an Ashy-breasted Flycatcher, and an equally surprising obliging group of Spotted Imperial Pigeons. Amazingly our adventure was almost over, and we headed out for a final dinner and a few celebratory beers! Well, we did once we'd found everyone... Sorry!

We left Los Banos early on the final morning and headed to La Mesa Ecopark in Quezon City, just to the north of Manila. This small area protects the southern end of a watershed and has recently been found to be home to some excellent species. Once again we found the star of the show, the rare Ashy Ground Thrush, and enjoyed great views of this stunner. We also enjoyed great views of the endemic Grey-backed Tailorbird, as well as Black-chinned Fruit Dove and more Lowland White-eyes. As we headed back to Manila we made a quick detour for a fine roosting adult Philippine Scops Owl, before arriving in good time at Manila Airport. The Classic Philippines tour had come to its conclusion, and an excellent selection of sadly rare endemics logged. It had been a great trip. Hard work had prevailed and good spirits been kept, despite some challenging conditions. For some a long journey home was waiting, but for many of us it was a case of onward ever onward as we boarded our next flight, this time to Bacolod on Negros, and the start of our Remote Philippines adventure!



The stunning Ashy Thrush once again rounded off a great tour! (Pete Morris)



The stunning Japanese Night Heron. Not quite the group's favourite, but probably mine!! (Pete Morris)

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Conservation threat categories and information are taken from *Threatened Birds of the World*, BirdLife International's magnificent book on the sad status of the rarest 10% of the world's avifauna, and updates on the BirdLife website: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/home>

(EW) = Extinct in the wild, **(CR)** = Critically Endangered, **(EN)** = Endangered, **(VU)** = Vulnerable, **(NT)** = Near Threatened, **(DD)** = Data Deficient.

For polytypic species, the subspecies seen on the tour, where known, is placed in parentheses at the end of the species comment. Generally, species listed with trinomials are not currently split by the IOC.

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **2019. IOC World Bird List (v 9.1)**. This list is updated twice annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>. Please note, this was the current version when the report checklist was created. Some alternative names are given in parentheses.

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BIRDS

- Wandering Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna arcuata* A few seen in flight at Bislig Airfield [nominate].
- Garganey** *Spatula querquedula* Two seen at Candaba Marsh.
- Philippine Duck** ◊ *Anas luzonica* (VU) Decent views of three at Candaba Marsh. Also one seen at Bislig Airfield.
- Philippine Megapode** ◊ (Tabon Scrubfowl) *Megapodius cumingii* Excellent views at St Paul's National Park [nominate].
- King Quail** ◊ *Excalfactoria chinensis* Excellent flight views of about five at Bislig Airfield [*lineata*].
- Red Junglefowl** *Gallus gallus* Several heard at Subic Bay and a chick seen there.
- Palawan Peacock-Pheasant** ◊ *Polyplectron napoleonis* (VU) See note.
- Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis* A few seen at Candaba Marsh.
- Cinnamon Bittern** *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* A couple seen at Candaba Marsh and a few others noted.
- Black Bittern** *Dupetor flavicollis* One seen in flight at Candaba Marsh.
- Japanese Night Heron** *Gorsachius goesagi* (EN) See note.
- Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* First seen in good numbers at Candaba Marsh [nominate].
- Striated Heron** *Butorides striata* One on the river near Mount Polis [*javanica*].
- Javan Pond Heron** *Ardeola speciosa* First seen at Candaba Marsh [nominate].
- Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus* Very common. First seen on the way to Candaba Marsh.
- Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* A few seen at Candaba.
- Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* 100s at Candaba Marsh were impressive [*manilensis*].
- Great Egret (Eastern G E)** *Ardea [alba] modesta* First seen at Candaba Marsh.
- Intermediate Egret** *Ardea intermedia* Plenty, first seen at Candaba Marsh [nominate].
- Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* First seen at Candaba Marsh.
- Pacific Reef Heron (P R Egret)** *Egretta sacra* Several seen around Sabang [nominate].
- Chinese Egret** ◊ *Egretta eulophotes* (VU) Good views of one at White Beach, Puerto Princessa.



The rare Chinese Egret on Palawan (Pete Morris)

- Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* A few scattered sightings.
- Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* A couple of juveniles seen on Mt Kitanglad [*hypoleucus*].
- Crested Honey Buzzard** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* Best views on Mt Kitanglad, including birds carrying honeycomb [*philippensis*].
- Philippine Honey Buzzard** ◊ *Pernis steerei* Best were the several seen in flight at PICOP.
- Crested Serpent Eagle** *Spilornis cheela* A few seen on Palawan [*palawanensis*].
- Philippine Serpent Eagle** ◊ *Spilornis holospilus* First seen at Mount Polis. Many others seen well.
- Philippine Eagle** ◊ *Pithecophaga jefferyi* (CR) Our bird of the trip. See note.
- Philippine Hawk-Eagle** ◊ *Nisaetus philippensis* (EN) See note.
- Pinsker's Hawk-Eagle** ◊ *Nisaetus pinskeri* (EN) (NL) One for some of the group at Mt Kitanglad..



A Philippine Serpent Eagle from La Mesa Ecopark and a Crested Goshawk from Palawan (Pete Morris)

- Crested Goshawk** *Accipiter trivirgatus* Best was one seen well perched at Cabayugan, near Sabang [palawanus].
- Besra** *Accipiter virgatus* Perched birds seen twice at Subic Bay. Other accipiters were likely this species [confusus].
- Eastern Marsh Harrier** *Circus spilonotus* A female seen at Candaba Marsh.
- Brahminy Kite** *Haliastur indus* Several seen well at Subic Bay were the first [intermedius].
- Grey-faced Buzzard** ◊ *Butastur indicus* Great views of one interested in the Japanese Night Heron's worm!
- Eastern Buzzard** *Buteo japonicus* Just one seen at Mount Polis [nominate].
- Barred Rail** ◊ *Gallirallus torquatus* Many seen at Candaba Marsh, and a few later in the trip [nominate].
- Buff-banded Rail** *Gallirallus philippensis* (NL) One seen briefly at Candaba [nominate].
- Plain Bush-hen** ◊ *Amaurornis olivacea* See note.
- White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* Best views were of a pair seen at Candaba Marsh.
- White-browed Crake** *Porzana cinerea* Great views of a pair at Candaba Marsh.
- Philippine Swamphen** ◊ *Porphyrio pulverulentus* A couple seen well at Candaba Marsh.
- Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* First seen at Candaba Marsh [orientalis].
- Spotted Buttonquail** ◊ *Turnix ocellatus* Good scope views of 3+ on the track at Los Banos.
- Barred Buttonquail** *Turnix suscitator* One flushed and glimpsed at the Cockatoo Viewpoint near Sabang [haynaldi].
- Pied Stilt** *Himantopus leucocephalus* c40 seen on the ponds at Panabo.
- Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva* 100+ seen on the ponds at Panabo.
- Grey Plover (Black-bellied P)** *Pluvialis squatarola* A few seen on the ponds at Panabo.
- Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius* First seen at Candaba Marsh [nominate].
- Lesser Sand Plover (Mongolian)** *Charadrius [mongolus] mongolus* Plenty seen on the ponds at Panabo.
- Greater Sand Plover** *Charadrius leschenaultii* Plenty seen on the ponds at Panabo [nominate].
- Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* One seen on the ponds at Panabo [variegatus].
- Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata* A few seen at Panabo [orientalis].
- Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* (NT) One seen on the mudflats at Panabo [baueri].
- Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* One seen on the mudflats at Panabo.
- Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea* (NT) 30+ seen on the ponds at Panabo.
- Long-toed Stint** *Calidris subminuta* A few scoped at Candaba Marsh.
- Red-necked Stint** *Calidris ruficollis* (NT) 20+ seen on the ponds at Panabo.
- Bukidnon Woodcock** ◊ *Scolopax bukidnonensis* Best were the regular displaying birds on Mt Kitanglad.
- Swinhoe's Snipe** ◊ *Gallinago megala* A couple at Bislig Airfield and c20 at Los Banos were thought to be this species.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* A few seen on the ponds and mudflats at Panabo.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* A few, the first on the ponds at Panabo.

Grey-tailed Tattler *Tringa brevipes* (NT) A few on the mudflats at Panabo.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* One seen on the ponds at Panabo [*terrignotae*].

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* c10 seen on the ponds at Panabo.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* First seen at Candaba Marsh.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Seen on the ponds at Panabo.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* 30+ along the coast at Panabo.

Great Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii* One for some at Panabo.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* Several seen well at Panabo [*affinis*].

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* A few seen along the coast at Panabo [*sinensis*].

Common Tern (Eastern C T) *Sterna [hirundo] longipennis* Two seen along the coast at Panabo.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* First seen at Candaba Marsh. Abundant along the coast at Panabo.

Rock Dove (Feral) *Columba livia* Introduced.

Metallic Pigeon *Columba vitiensis* Great views of a perched bird at the Compostela Valley [*griseogularis*].

Red Turtle Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica* Very common at Candaba Marsh [*humilis*].

Spotted Dove *Spilopelia chinensis* First seen near to Cagayan de Oro [*tigrina*].

Philippine Cuckoo-Dove ◊ *Macropygia tenuirostris* See note.

Common Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica* One seen in flight at Angono. Heard singing on Mt Kitanglad [nominate].

Zebra Dove *Geopelia striata* First seen at Candaba Marsh.

Mindanao Bleeding-heart ◊ *Gallicolumba crinigera* (VU) (H) One heard distantly at PICOP [nominate].

White-eared Brown Dove ◊ *Phapitreron leucotis* Two forms seen: nominate on Luzon, *brevirostris* on Mindanao.

Amethyst Brown Dove ◊ *Phapitreron amethystinus* A few seen well, including a very confiding individual at PICOP.

Philippine Green Pigeon ◊ *Treron axillaris* Nominate at Subic Bay, *canescens* at PICOP.

Thick-billed Green Pigeon *Treron curvirostra* Several seen well near to Sabang [*erimacrus*].

Flame-breasted Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus marcheii* (VU) Stunning views of two or three birds at Mount Polis.

Yellow-breasted Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus occipitalis* Nominate heard at Subic Bay, *incognitus* seen well on Mindanao.

Black-chinned Fruit Dove ◊ *Ptilinopus leclancheri* Nominate seen at La Mesa Ecopark, *gironieri* on Palawan.

Pink-bellied Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula poliocephala* (NT) A few heard, and good scope views of one at PICOP.

Spotted Imperial Pigeon ◊ *Ducula carola* See note.

Green Imperial Pigeon *Ducula aenea* Nominate on Luzon and Mindanao, *palawanensis* on Palawan.

Rufous Coucal ◊ *Centropus unirufus* (NT) Several groups seen at Subic Bay, with some good views.

Black-faced Coucal ◊ *Centropus melanops* Brilliant views of a few at PICOP. Several more heard.



Yellow-breasted Fruit Dove at Mt Kitanglad and a smart Black-faced Coucal in PICOP (Pete Morris)

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* A few heard on Palawan [*bubutus*].
Philippine Coucal ◊ *Centropus viridis* A few seen, the first at Subic Bay.
Lesser Coucal *Centropus bengalensis* Just a few seen, the first at Candaba Marsh [*philippinensis*].
Chestnut-breasted Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus curvirostris* Four seen near to Sabang [*harringtoni*].
Rough-crested Malkoha ◊ *Dasylophus superciliosus* A few seen well at Subic Bay.
Scale-feathered Malkoha ◊ *Dasylophus cumingi* Brilliant views of several in the Banaue and Mount Polis areas.
Asian Koel *Eudynamys scolopaceus* One heard at Irawan Watershed, Puerto Princessa [*mindanensis*].
Violet Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus* Good views of a male along road 4 at PICOP [*amethystinus*].
Plaintive Cuckoo *Cacomantis merulinus* First seen at Candaba Marsh [n nominate].
Rusty-breasted Cuckoo *Cacomantis sepulcralis* Several heard and a few seen well on Mt Kitanglad [n nominate].
Philippine Drongo-Cuckoo ◊ *Surniculus velutinus* Good scope views of one in PICOP. Others heard [n nominate].
Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo *Surniculus lugubris* A few heard on Palawan and one seen at Iwahig [*brachyurus*].
Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus optatus* An adult at the base of Mt Kitanglad. Assumed to be this species, not Himalayan.
Eastern Grass Owl ◊ *Tyto longimembris* Great views of two at Bislig Airfield [*amauronota*].



An Eastern Grass Owl at Bislig Airport (Pete Morris)

Giant Scops Owl ◊ *Otus gurneyi* (VU) Great views on Mt Kitanglad and a one-eyed bird at the Eden Resort.
Palawan Scops Owl ◊ *Otus fuliginosus* (NT) Brilliant views of one near Sabang.
Philippine Scops Owl ◊ *Otus megalotis* Three cute begging juveniles at Subic and a roosting adult in Manila.
Everett's Scops Owl ◊ *Otus everetti* Brilliant views near to the camp on Mt Kitanglad. Also seen near Davao and in PICOP.
Mindanao Scops Owl ◊ *Otus mirus* (NT) (H) Heard distantly at Mt Kitanglad and at the Compostela Valley but no luck.
Luzon Scops Owl ◊ *Otus longicornis* (NT) Stunning views of one pre-dawn at Mount Polis.
Mantanani Scops Owl ◊ *Otus mantananensis* (NT) Brilliant views of a pair on Cana Island, Puerto Princessa [*cuyensis*].
Philippine Eagle-Owl ◊ *Bubo philippensis* (VU) Great views of an adult at dusk at Angono [n nominate].
Spotted Wood Owl ◊ *Strix seloputo* Brilliant views of one near to Sabang [*wiepkeni*].
Chocolate Boobook ◊ *Ninox randi* (NT) Excellent views of one at Subic Bay, which was attracted to the lights.
Luzon Hawk-Owl ◊ *Ninox philippensis* Excellent views of a pair and a single at Subic Bay. Many heard there [n nominate].
Mindanao Hawk-Owl ◊ *Ninox spilocephala* (NT) Excellent views of singles on two mornings at PICOP.
Philippine Frogmouth ◊ *Batrachostomus septimus* See note.
Palawan Frogmouth ◊ *Batrachostomus chaseni* Stunning views of one near to Sabang.
Great Eared Nightjar *Lyncornis macrotis* Several seen at Subic Bay. A few others later in the trip [n nominate].
Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus* (H) One heard at Hundred Caves, c15km back from Sabang [*johnsoni*].
Philippine Nightjar ◊ *Caprimulgus manillensis* Great views of a couple at Angono. Also seen well at Mt Kitanglad.
Savanna Nightjar *Caprimulgus affinis* (H/NL) Heard at Angono.
Whiskered Treeswift *Hemiprocne comata* Several seen well at Subic Bay. Also at Mt Kitanglad [*major*].

Grey-rumped Swiftlet ◊ *Collocalia marginata* Very common at Subic Bay. Several seen on Palawan [n nominate].

Ridgetop Swiftlet ◊ *Collocalia isonota* Two forms: nominate on Luzon, *bagobo* on Mindanao.

Pygmy Swiftlet ◊ *Collocalia troglodytes* First seen at Lagawe. Also very common at PICOP.

Philippine Swiftlet ◊ *Aerodramus mearnsi* Seen well several times at Mt Kitanglad and at the Compostela Valley.

Ameline Swiftlet ◊ *Aerodramus [amelis] amelis* First seen on the journey from Banaue to Manila. Many more seen.

Ameline Swiftlet ◊ (Palawan S) *Aerodramus [amelis] palawanensis* Very common and widespread on Palawan.

Philippine Spine-tailed Swift ◊ *Mearnsia picina* (VU) Several great views in various areas at PICOP.

Brown-backed Needletail *Hirundapus giganteus* A few seen in the Sabang area.

Purple Needletail ◊ *Hirundapus celebensis* Great views of a flock of c60 over the camp clearing at Mt Kitanglad.

Asian Palm Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis* Several seen over Los Banos [*pallidior*].

Pacific Swift *Apus pacificus* (NL) Seen by some on Palawan.

House Swift *Apus nipalensis* One seen at Subic Bay [n nominate].

Philippine Trogon ◊ *Harpactes ardens* A few seen in PICOP, but only females were obliging [n nominate].

Oriental Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis* A few seen well at Subic Bay [*orientalis*].

Spotted Wood Kingfisher ◊ *Actenoides lindsayi* A couple in the spotlight at Subic Bay, then seen well at Mt Makiling.

Hombron's Kingfisher ◊ *Actenoides hombroni* (VU) Heard at Mt Kitanglad then great views of a pair in PICOP.

Ruddy Kingfisher *Halcyon coromanda* One seen by some near Davao [*major*] and heard on Palawan [*linae*].

White-throated Kingfisher ◊ (Brown-breasted K) *Halcyon [smyrnenis] gularis* A few seen, the first at Subic Bay.

Winchell's Kingfisher ◊ *Todiramphus winchelli* (VU) Excellent views of a female on the drive back from PICOP [*mindanensis*].

Collared Kingfisher *Todiramphus chloris* First seen at Mt Kitanglad [n nominate].

Blue-eared Kingfisher *Alcedo meninting* One seen along the Balsahan Trail, Iwahig [n nominate].

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* First seen at Candaba Marsh [*bengalensis*].

Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher (Rufous-backed K) *Ceyx erithaca* Several seen very well on Palawan [*rufidorsa*].

Indigo-banded Kingfisher ◊ (Northern I-b K) *Ceyx [cyanopectus] cyanopectus* Brilliant views at Lagawe.

Southern Silvery Kingfisher ◊ *Ceyx argentatus* (NT) Great views of one on a pond at PICOP. Stunner!

Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus* First seen at Candaba Marsh.

Blue-throated Bee-eater ◊ (Rufous-crowned B-e) *Merops [viridis] americanus* Many seen well at Subic Bay.

Rufous Hornbill ◊ (Southern R H) *Buceros [hydrocorax] mindanensis* (VU) At least 4, including a juv. at PICOP.

Palawan Hornbill ◊ *Anthracoceros marchei* (VU) A few seen well from the Cockatoo Viewpoint and others heard.

Writhed Hornbill ◊ *Rhabdotorrhinus leucocephalus* (NT) Plenty seen well at PICOP.

Luzon Hornbill ◊ *Penelopides manillae* Common, with many good views at Subic Bay [n nominate].

Mindanao Hornbill ◊ *Penelopides affinis* Several seen at Mt Kitanglad and plenty seen in PICOP [n nominate].

Coppersmith Barbet *Psilopogon haemacephalus* Nominat seen at Subic Bay *mindanensis* on Mindanao.

Philippine Pygmy Woodpecker ◊ *Yungipicus maculatus* Two forms: *validirostris* on Luzon, *fulvifasciatus* on Mindanao.

White-bellied Woodpecker *Dryocopus javensis* See note.

Spot-throated Flameback ◊ *Dinopium everetti* (NT) A few seen well on Palawan.

Buff-spotted Flameback ◊ *Chrysocolaptes lucidus* Excellent views at Mt Kitanglad and at PICOP [*montanus*].



Two more endemics... Buff-spotted Flameback and the increasingly rare Pink-bellied Imperial Pigeon (Pete Morris)

Luzon Flameback ◇ *Chrysocolaptes haematribon* Several seen well at Subic Bay. Also heard at Mount Polis.
Red-headed Flameback ◇ *Chrysocolaptes erythrocephalus* (EN) Great views of a male on Palawan.
Sooty Woodpecker ◇ (Northern S W) *Mulleripicus [funebri] funebris* (NT) Good scope views of a pair at Subic Bay.
Great Slaty Woodpecker *Mulleripicus pulverulentus* (VU) Great views of three near to Sabang.
Philippine Falconet ◇ *Microhierax erythrogenys* A couple scoped up at Subic Bay. Also a few at PICOP [nominate].
Oriental Hobby ◇ *Falco severus* A couple of pairs in the Sabang area, including a pair seen well on cliffs.
Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* Two seen distantly on Mt Kitanglad and one hunting swiftlets on Palawan [ernesti].
Red-vented Cuckoo ◇ *Cacatua haematuropygia* (CR) Great views from the Cuckoo Viewpoint near Sabang.
Mindanao Racket-tail ◇ *Prioniturus waterstradti* (NT) Heard and seen briefly over Mt Kitanglad a couple of times.
Montane Racket-tail ◇ *Prioniturus montanus* (NT) One flew over calling at Mount Polis.
Blue-headed Racket-tail ◇ *Prioniturus platenae* (VU) A few seen very well on Palawan.



Blue-headed Racket-tail and Great Slaty Woodpecker both performed well on Palawan (Pete Morris)

Green Racket-tail ◇ *Prioniturus luconensis* (EN) A pair seen very well at Subic Bay.
Blue-crowned Racket-tail ◇ *Prioniturus discurus* A pair seen well in the scope at PICOP.
Blue-naped Parrot ◇ *Tanygnathus lucionensis* (NT) Seen well at Subic Bay [*lucionensis*] and on Palawan [*salvadorii*].
Guaibero ◇ *Bolbopsittacus lunulatus* Nominate form seen well on Luzon, *mindanensis* on Mindanao.
Philippine Hanging Parrot ◇ *Loriculus philippensis* Nominate form seen well on Luzon, *apicalis* on Mindanao.
Philippine Pitta ◇ *Erythropitta erythrogaster* Nominate heard at PICOP, *propinqua* seen very well on Palawan.
Hooded Pitta *Pitta sordida* A few on Palawan with great spotlight views of roosting birds [*palawanensis*].
Azure-breasted Pitta ◇ *Pitta steerii* (VU) Brilliant views of one in PICOP. Others heard there [nominate].
Golden-bellied Gerygone *Gerygone sulphurea* First seen at Candaba Marsh [*simplex*].
White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus* Very common at Subic Bay. Also seen at Mt Kitanglad [nominate].
Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia* A few on Palawan, including one seen well at White Beach [*aequanimis*].
Fiery Minivet ◇ *Pericrocotus igneus* (NT) A pair seen in the canopy along the Balsahan Trail, Iwahig [nominate].
Scarlet Minivet ◇ (Philippine M) *Pericrocotus [speciosus] leytenis* See note.
Ashy Minivet *Pericrocotus divaricatus* A couple of flocks seen well at Subic Bay.
Bar-bellied Cuckooshrike ◇ *Coracina striata* Common at Subic Bay [nominate] and seen on Palawan [*kochii*].
McGregor's Cuckooshrike ◇ *Malindangia mcgregori* See note.

Blackish Cuckooshrike ◊ *Edolisoma coerulescens* Excellent views on a couple of occasions at Subic Bay [nominate].
Black-bibbed Cicadabird ◊ *Edolisoma mindanense* (VU) One seen well at PICOP. A couple of others heard [nominate].
Black-and-white Triller ◊ *Lalage melanoleuca* One seen well at PICOP [*minor*].
Pied Triller *Lalage nigra* First seen at Candaba Marsh. Also seen at Mt Kitanglad.
Green-backed Whistler ◊ *Pachycephala albiventris* Several seen in the Mount Polis area [nominate].
Yellow-bellied Whistler ◊ *Pachycephala philippinensis* Several seen well on Mt Kitanglad [*apoensis*].
Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* A common and widespread winter visitor [*lucionensis*].



Brown Shrike is a common winter visitor throughout the Philippines (Pete Morris)

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* (NT) Plenty seen, the first at Candaba Marsh [*nasutus*].
Mountain Shrike ◊ *Lanius validirostris* Great views of a pair at Mount Polis [nominate].
Dark-throated Oriole *Oriolus xanthonotus* (NT) One seen well near to Sabang [*persuasus*].
Philippine Oriole ◊ *Oriolus steerii* A couple seen well at PICOP. Others heard [*samarensis*].
White-lored Oriole ◊ *Oriolus albiloris* Excellent views of one at Subic Bay. A couple of others heard there.
Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis* Very common at Subic Bay. Also a few on Palawan [nominate].
Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus* Several seen on Palawan [nominate].
Balicassiao ◊ *Dicrurus balicassius* Seen well several times at Subic Bay and at Mt Makiling [nominate].
Hair-crested Drongo ◊ (Palawan D) *Dicrurus [hottentottus] palawanensis* Several seen well on Palawan.
Hair-crested Drongo ◊ (Mindanao D) *Dicrurus [hottentottus] striatus* A few seen on Mt Kitanglad and again at PICOP.
Mindanao Blue Fantail ◊ *Rhipidura superciliaris* Several seen well in the sparse mixed flocks at PICOP [*apo*].
Blue-headed Fantail ◊ *Rhipidura cyaniceps* Several seen in the Mount Polis area [*pinicola*].
Philippine Pied Fantail ◊ *Rhipidura nigritorquis* A few seen, the first at Candaba Marsh.
Black-and-cinnamon Fantail ◊ *Rhipidura nigrocinnamomea* Two forms: *hutchinsoni*, Mt Kitanglad, nominate, Compostela Valley.
Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea* First seen on the walk down from Mt Kitanglad. A few in PICOP [nominate].
Short-crested Monarch ◊ *Hypothymis helenae* (NT) A few seen at PICOP with some great views [*agusanae*].
Blue Paradise Flycatcher ◊ *Terpsiphone cyanescens* Great views on several occasions on Palawan.
Rufous Paradise Flycatcher ◊ *Terpsiphone cinnamomea* A few seen in the mixed flocks at PICOP [nominate].
Slender-billed Crow ◊ (Palawan C) *Corvus [enca] pusillus* Common and entertaining on Palawan.
Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* Widespread, first seen at Subic Bay [*philippinus*].
Citrine Canary-Flycatcher ◊ *Culicicapa helianthea* A couple seen at Mount Polis [*septentrionalis*].
Elegant Tit ◊ *Pardaliparus elegans* Two forms: *montigenus* at Mount Polis and *mindanensis* in the highlands of Mindanao.
Palawan Tit ◊ *Pardaliparus amabilis* (NT) Only seen well along the Balsahan Trail, Iwahig. Others heard.

Oriental Skylark *Alauda gulgula* Seen well at Candaba Marsh [*wolfei*].

Black-headed Bulbul *Pycnonotus atriceps* Several seen well on Palawan, especially around Sabang [nominate].

Yellow-wattled Bulbul ◊ *Pycnonotus urostictus* Several seen well at PICOP [*philippensis*].

Yellow-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus goiavier* Nominate seen on Luzon, *suluensis* on Mindanao.

Ashy-fronted Bulbul ◊ *Pycnonotus cinereifrons* Several on Palawan; one attacking itself in the mirror at our hotel!!

Palawan Bulbul ◊ *Alophoixus frater* Several seen well on Palawan.

Sulphur-bellied Bulbul ◊ *Iole palawanensis* Gave us the runaround, but eventually showed well near Sabang.



More endemics! (Clockwise from above) Sulphur-bellied Bulbul, Elegant Tit, Sulphur-billed Nuthatch and Short-crested Monarch (Pete Morris)



Philippine Bulbul ◊ *Hypsipetes philippinus* Nominate first seen at Subic Bay, *saturation* on Mindanao.

Yellowish Bulbul ◊ *Hypsipetes everetti* Excellent views of several at PICOP [nominate].

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* A few seen at Candaba Marsh [*ijimae*].

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Common, first seen at Candaba Marsh [*gutturalis*].

Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica* Plenty seen, the first in Manila [*javanica*].
Striated Swallow *Cecropis striolata* Just a few, the first seen on the drive to Banaue.
Mountain Tailorbird *Phyllergates cucullatus* A couple seen well at Mount Polis [*philippinus*].
Rufous-headed Tailorbird ◇ *Phyllergates heterolaemus* Seen well at Mt Kitanglad, and the Compostela Valley.
Philippine Bush Warbler ◇ *Horornis seebohmi* Many heard and a couple seen well at Mount Polis.
Philippine Leaf Warbler ◇ *Phylloscopus olivaceus* Several seen well in the sparse mixed flocks at PICOP.
Kamchatka Leaf Warbler ◇ *Phylloscopus examinandus* First seen (and heard) at Candaba Marsh.
Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* First seen (and heard) at Candaba Marsh.
Negros Leaf Warbler ◇ *Phylloscopus nigrorum* See note.
Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus* First seen at Candaba Marsh, where fairly skulking [*harterti*].
Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler ◇ *Helopsaltes ochotensis* Many heard at Candaba and Bislig where a few seen.
Long-tailed Bush Warbler ◇ *Locustella caudata* See note.
Benguet Bush Warbler ◇ *Locustella seebohmi* Good views of a couple at Mount Polis.
Tawny Grassbird *Cincloramphus timoriensis* Two forms: *tweeddalei* first at Mount Polis, *crex* first at Mt Kitanglad.
Striated Grassbird *Megalurus palustris* Noisy! First seen at Candaba Marsh [*forbesi*].
Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* First seen at Candaba Marsh [*tinnabulans*].
Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis* One seen well at Bislig Airfield [*semirufus*].



Yellowish White-eye (above), Warbling White-eye and Negros Leaf Warbler from Mt Polis and a Rusty-crowned Babbler from PICOP (Pete Morris)



Trilling Tailorbird ◇ *Orthotomus chloronotus* Excellent views of one at Subic Bay. Others heard there.
Rufous-fronted Tailorbird ◇ *Orthotomus frontalis* A few seen at PICOP but generally as elusive as ever [nominate]!
Grey-backed Tailorbird ◇ *Orthotomus derbianus* Seen very well at La Mesa Ecopark [nominate].
Rufous-tailed Tailorbird *Orthotomus sericeus* A few seen well on Palawan, the first at White Beach [nominate].
Black-headed Tailorbird ◇ *Orthotomus nigriceps* Good views on a couple of occasions in PICOP. More heard!
Pin-striped Tit-Babbler *Macronus gularis* Common on Palawan [*woodi*].
Brown Tit-Babbler ◇ *Macronus striaticeps* Great views at Mt Kitanglad and at PICOP [*mindanensis*].
Striated Wren-Babbler ◇ *Ptilocichla mindanensis* Decent views on a couple of occasions at PICOP [*mindanensis*].

Falcated Wren-Babbler ◇ *Ptilocichla falcata* (VU) A shy bird that gave several good looks at Iwahig.
Ashy-headed Babbler ◇ *Malacocincla cinereiceps* Good views of several on Palawan.
Melodious Babbler ◇ *Malacopteron palawanense* (NT) A couple of groups showed nicely along the Balsahan Trail.
Chestnut-faced Babbler ◇ *Zosterornis whiteheadi* Abundant around Mount Polis [nominate]!
Mindanao Pygmy Babbler ◇ *Dasyrocotapha plateni* (NT) Great views on a couple of occasions at PICOP.
Rusty-crowned Babbler ◇ *Sterrhoptilus capitalis* Great views on a couple of occasions at PICOP [*euroaustralis*].
Mindanao White-eye ◇ *Lophozosterops goodfellowi* Good views at Mt Kitanglad [*gracilis*] and Compostela Valley [nominate].
Warbling White-eye *Zosterops japonicus* See note.
Lowland White-eye ◇ *Zosterops meyeri* Seen well at Mt Makiling and at La Mesa Ecopark [nominate].
Everett's White-eye ◇ *Zosterops everetti* Great views a few times on Mindanao [*basilanicus*].
Yellowish White-eye ◇ *Zosterops nigrorum* Great views of 10+ in the grounds of the Banaue Hotel [*aureiloris*].
Asian Fairy-Bluebird ◇ (Palawan F B) *Irena [puella] tweeddalii* (NT) A few seen well on Palawan.
Sulphur-billed Nuthatch ◇ *Sitta oenochlamys* Two forms of this cracker seen: *mesoleuca* on Luzon, *apo* on Mindanao.
Asian Glossy Starling *Aplonis panayensis* First seen near Cagayan de Oro. Very common on Palawan [nominate]!!
Short-tailed Starling ◇ *Aplonis minor* Good views at Mt Kitanglad and the Compostela Valley [*todayensis*].
Apo Myna ◇ *Basilornis mirandus* (NT) Great views of several at Mt Kitanglad.
Coledo ◇ *Sarcops calvus* Nominate common and showy at Subic Bay, *melanonotus* on Mindanao.
Common Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa* At least one pair seen near to Sabang. Others heard [*palawanensis*].
Crested Myna *Acridotheres cristatellus* One or two seen briefly on the journeys to and from Manila to Banaue.
Chestnut-cheeked Starling ◇ *Agropsar philippensis* A female seen well, and a small flock briefly, at Mt Kitanglad.
Stripe-headed Rhabdornis ◇ *Rhabdornis mystacalis* Excellent views of several at Subic Bay and Mt Makiling [nominate].
Stripe-breasted Rhabdornis ◇ *Rhabdornis inornatus* Several were seen well at Mt Kitanglad. Also one at PICOP [*alaris*].
Ashy Thrush ◇ *Geokichla cinerea* (VU) Excellent views of one at La Mesa Ecopark. A real cracker!
Island Thrush ◇ *Turdus poliocephalus* A couple of the form *thomassoni* at Mount Polis, *kelleri* at the Compostela Valley.
Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus* Quite common at Mt Kitanglad and the Compostela.
Brown-headed Thrush ◇ *Turdus chrysolaus* Great views of a male at Mount Polis [nominate].
Philippine Magpie-Robin ◇ *Copsychus mindanensis* Great views of a couple at Los Banos.
White-browed Shama ◇ *Copsychus luzoniensis* Excellent views on a couple of occasions at Subic Bay [nominate].
White-vented Shama ◇ *Copsychus niger* Fairly common on Palawan, where many seen well.



A sleepy White-vented Shama on Palawan (Pete Morris)

Grey-streaked Flycatcher *Muscicapa griseicticta* Plenty seen, the first at Subic Bay.
Ashy-breasted Flycatcher ◇ *Muscicapa randi* (VU) Great scope views of one at Los Banos. Quite a surprise!
Palawan Blue Flycatcher ◇ *Cyornis lemprieri* (NT) Several seen well, the first at St Paul's National Park.
Rufous-tailed Jungle Flycatcher ◇ *Cyornis ruficauda* Great views of one in a mixed flock at PICOP [*samarensis*].
Turquoise Flycatcher ◇ *Eumyias panayensis* Common at Mount Polis [*nigrimentalis*] and on Mindanao [*nigriloris*].
Bagobo Babbler ◇ *Leonardina woodi* Heard singing at Mt Kitanglad and Compostela Valley.

White-browed Shortwing ◊ (Luzon S) *Brachypteryx [montana] poliogyna* Great views of a pair at Mount Polis. See note.
White-browed Shortwing ◊ (Mindanao S) *Brachypteryx [montana] malindangensis* Heard and seen briefly at Mt Kitanglad.
Morris's Shortwing ◊ *Brachypteryx sp. nov.* Seen well on Mt Apo where the distinctive song could be heard.
Mugimaki Flycatcher ◊ *Ficedula mugimaki* A few seen well at Mt Kitanglad.
Little Slaty Flycatcher ◊ *Ficedula basilanica* (VU) Brilliant views of one at PICOP.
Palawan Flycatcher ◊ *Ficedula platanae* (VU) Brilliant views of one at Iwahig. A little cracker.
Cryptic Flycatcher ◊ *Ficedula crypta* Excellent views of a couple on Mt Apo.
Bundok Flycatcher ◊ *Ficedula luzoniensis* Two forms seen: *rara* at Mount Polis and *montigena* at Mt Kitanglad.
Little Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula westermanni* Two forms: *rabori* at Mount Polis and nominate on Mindanao.
Luzon Water Redstart ◊ *Phoenicurus bicolor* (VU) Some great views in the Bay-yo area below Mt Polis.
Blue Rock Thrush (Red-bellied R T) *Monticola [solitarius] philippensis* Just one female at Subic Bay.
Pied Bush Chat *Saxicola caprata* Several seen, the first at Candaba Marsh [nominate].
Philippine Leafbird ◊ *Chloropsis flavipennis* Good scope views of one at PICOP.
Yellow-throated Leafbird ◊ *Chloropsis palawanensis* Several seen well on Palawan.
Olive-backed Flowerpecker ◊ *Prionochilus olivaceus* A few seen well in PICOP, though typically did not linger [nominate].
Palawan Flowerpecker ◊ *Prionochilus plateni* Several seen well on Palawan [nominate].
Striped Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum aeruginosum* Good scope views of a couple in a giant fruiting tree at PICOP.
Whiskered Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum proprium* Great scope views of a singing bird on Mt Apo.



The endemics keep coming! Orange-tufted Spiderhunter, Whiskered Flowerpecker, Handsome Sunbird and Luzon Sunbird (left) (Pete Morris)



Olive-capped Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum nigrilore* Two forms: *diutae* at Mt Kitanglad, nominate at the Compostela Valley.

Flame-crowned Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum anthonyi* (NT) A couple seen well at Mount Polis.

Bicolored Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum bicolor* A few, the first gave excellent views by the camp at Mt Kitanglad [nominate].

Red-keeled Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum australe* Plenty in the end. First seen well around Davao.

Orange-bellied Flowerpecker *Dicaeum trigonostigma* Plenty seen, the first around Davao [*cinereigulare*].

Buzzing Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum hypoleucum* Two forms: *obscurum* at Mount Polis *pontifex* at Mt Kitanglad.

Pygmy Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum pygmaeum* See note.

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker *Dicaeum ignipectus* Two forms: *luzoniense* on Mount Polis, *apo* on Mindanao.

Brown-throated Sunbird *Anthreptes malacensis* A few seen well on Palawan [*paraguae*].

Grey-throated Sunbird ◊ *Anthreptes griseigularis* The nominate form seen in PICOP, *birgitae* seen at Los Banos.

Purple-throated Sunbird *Leptocoma sperata* Several seen well in PICOP and on Palawan.

Purple-throated Sunbird ◊ (Julia's S) *Leptocoma [sperata] juliae* Scope views of a male near to Davao.

Copper-throated Sunbird ◊ *Leptocoma calcostetha* Great views of a pair near to Puerto Princessa.

Olive-backed Sunbird ◊ *Cinnyris jugularis* See note.

Grey-hooded Sunbird ◊ *Aethopyga primigenia* (NT) Quite common in mixed flocks at Mt Kitanglad [*diuatae*].

Apo Sunbird ◊ *Aethopyga boltoni* (NT) One or two males seen well high up at Mt Kitanglad [nominate].

Lina's Sunbird ◊ *Aethopyga linaraborae* (NT) Great views of several along the road at the Compostela Valley.

Flaming Sunbird ◊ *Aethopyga flagrans* Great views of a pair at Los Banos.

Metallic-winged Sunbird ◊ *Aethopyga pulcherrima* Several seen very well in PICOP.

Luzon Sunbird ◊ *Aethopyga jefferyi* Several seen at Mount Polis and in the grounds of the Banaue Hotel.

Lovely Sunbird ◊ *Aethopyga shelleyi* Several seen well on Palawan, the first along the Balsahan Trail, Iwahig.

Handsome Sunbird ◊ *Aethopyga bella* Two forms: *minuta* on Luzon, nominate in Mindanao.

Orange-tufted Spiderhunter ◊ *Arachnothera flammifera* A few seen at PICOP with great views of one [nominate].

Pale Spiderhunter ◊ *Arachnothera dilutior* Several seen well on Palawan, the first at Iwahig.

Naked-faced Spiderhunter ◊ *Arachnothera clarae* (H) Sadly only heard at PICOP.

Cinnamon Ibon ◊ *Hypocryptadius cinnamomeus* Regular in flocks at Mt Kitanglad and the Compostela Valley.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* Common and widespread.

Tawny-breasted Parrotfinch ◊ *Erythrura hyperythra* A surprise to find these feeding in bamboo at Mt Polis [*brunneiventris*].

Red-eared Parrotfinch ◊ *Erythrura coloria* (NT) Seen well at Mt Kitanglad and again at the Compostela Valley.

Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata* A few seen at Los Banos [*cabanisi*].

White-bellied Munia *Lonchura leucogastra* A few seen, though most were just bombing over [*manueli*].

Chestnut Munia *Lonchura atricapilla* First seen at Candaba Marsh [*jagori*].

Java Sparrow (introduced) *Lonchura oryzivora* Two seen in a park in Victoria, on the way to Banaue.

Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla tschutschensis* First seen at Candaba Marsh [nominate].

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* Several seen at Mt Polis and Mt Kitanglad.

Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus* First seen at Candaba Marsh [*lugubris*].

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* A few seen, the first at Mount Polis.

White-cheeked Bullfinch ◊ *Pyrrhula leucogenis* Three seen below Mount Polis [nominate] and 2 at Mt Kitanglad [*steerei*].

Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* Two seen flying over calling at Mt Polis [*luzoniensis*].



The stunning but elusive Red-eared Parrotfinch - thankfully this one showed well to all! (Pete Morris)



An unknown species of tent-making bat from PICOP (Pete Morris)

MAMMALS

Crab-eating Macaque (Long-tailed M) *Macaca fascicularis* Plenty seen.

Finlayson's Squirrel (introduced) *Callosciurus finlaysonii* A few seen at La Mesa Ecopark, where introduced.

Northern Palawan Tree Squirrel *Sundasciurus juvencus* A handful on Palawan.

Mindanao Squirrel (M Tree S) *Sundasciurus mindanensis* A couple seen at Mt Kitanglad.

Golden-capped Fruit Bat (G-crowned Flying Fox) *Acerodon jubatus* An impressive colony at Subic Bay.

Large Flying-fox *Pteropus vampyrus* A few at Subic Bay.



Motorcycle madness on Mindanao!! (Pete Morris)



We were incredibly lucky to see two different Philippine (Luzon) Hawk-Eagles very well indeed! (Pete Morris)

NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

The most up to date referenced taxonomic list referred to in the Tour Report is that of the IOC World Bird Names. (Gill, F and Donsker, D Eds). 2019. IOC World Bird Names v9.2. Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

Palawan Peacock-pheasant *Polyplectron napoleonis*

Brilliant views of the male near to the Underground River at St Paul's National Park. I understand that he disappeared soon after we saw him which is sad and the end of an era!

Japanese Night Heron *Gorsachius goisagi*

Brilliant views of a sub-adult and then an adult near to Davao. On a couple of occasions they caught massive earthworms, nearly a foot long. On one occasion, this attracted a Grey-faced Buzzard, and the sub-adult night heron fluffed up its head and neck feathers like a cobra!! A stunning bonus to the tour.

Philippine Eagle *Pithecophaga jefferyi*

Decent scope views of a pair on Mt Kitanglad on consecutive days. On the first date, we watched the pair displaying, grappling talons and spinning down like a giant sycamore seed!

Philippine Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus philippensis*

Excellent views of a perched immature at Subic Bay. One or two other raptors seen briefly were probably this species and we then enjoyed stunning flight views of an adult at Mount Polis. It was seen at close range, being mobbed by an Eastern Buzzard.

Plain Bush-hen *Amaurornis olivacea*

Several heard on Mt Kitanglad, where we also accidentally lured one in to a snare, which we released and examined in the hand. Also seen on the track at Los Banos.

Philippine Cuckoo-Dove *Macropygia tenuirostris*

Two forms noted: on Mindanao, we saw several of the nominate form in flight on Mt Kitanglad and then seen well at the Compostela Valley. On Palawan, we heard the form *septentrionalis* a few times.

Spotted Imperial Pigeon *Ducula carola*

Remarkably, we saw two different forms of this usually rare pigeon! Initially we had good scope views of two perched birds at the Compostela Valley, sat alongside a Metallic Pigeon [*mindanensis*]. We then went on to see four in the Botanical Gardens at Los Banos which showed even better [nominate]!!

Philippine Frogmouth *Batrachostomus septimus*

We were lucky to enjoy sensational views of two forms of this amazing species. On Luzon we observed the form *microrynchus*, whilst at Mt Kitanglad we had fantastic views of the nominate form. Amazing eyes!

White-bellied Woodpecker *Dryocopus javensis*

We noted three forms of this widespread species: *confusus* was seen brilliantly at Subic Bay; *esthloterus* was seen at Mount Polis and *multilunatus* was seen at PICOP.

Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus [speciosus] letensis*

We saw two forms of this potential split. On Luzon we had great views of a small flock including a couple of flaming orange males on Mount Polis. On Mindanao we saw the form *gonzalesi* several flocks of which were seen well at PICOP



Everett's Scops Owl from Mt Kitanglad. Not long ago this was simply a Philippine Scops Owl (Pete Morris)

McGregor's Cuckooshrike *Malindangia mcgregori*

Several seen well at Mt Kitanglad. We also saw another pair nearer to Davao. The bizarre song and subtly different plumage suggest this is probably actually a new species!!

Negros Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus nigrorum*

We saw three forms of this species which was formerly known as Mountain Leaf Warbler. On Mount Polis, the form *benquetensis* was very common. On Mt Kitanglad, we saw several of the form *diuatae* which shows pale underparts and white in the tail whilst at the Compostela Valley, we saw the form *mindanensis*, with yellow underparts and white in the tail.

Long-tailed Bush Warbler *Locustella caudata*

We saw different forms of this species which may well end up as different species... Many of the nominate form were heard at Mount Polis where a couple were seen very well after some effort. The form *unicolor* gave excellent views, with one wondering around on the ground at Mt Kitanglad. Many more were heard there and another seen more briefly. We also saw one seen at the Compostela Valley, which may represent a new form?

Warbling White-eye *Zosterops japonicus*

With the revision of the white-eye complex, the birds formerly known as Mountain White-eyes have been lumped into the birds formerly known as Japanese White-eye, with the name Warbling White-eye being used for the enlarged species. In addition, we saw three forms of Warbling White-eye during the tour: *whiteheadi* was common at Mount Polis, *diuatae* was abundant in mixed flocks at Mt Kitanglad and *vulcani* was seen well at the Compostela Valley.

White-browed Shortwing *Brachypteryx montana*

I have listed each taxon separately as I strongly suspect that further splits will follow in this complex, and it will make it easier to fathom out in the future. The Asian equivalent of tapaculos in my opinion!!!

Pygmy Flowerpecker *Dicaeum pygmaeum*

We saw three forms of this widespread and variable species. The form *salomonseni* was first seen well in the grounds of the Banaue Hotel, *palawanorum* was seen well on Palawan and nominate was seen at La Mesa Ecopark.

Olive-backed Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis*

Several of the nominate form were seen at various sites whilst on Palawan we saw the lovely orange-breasted form *aurora*. Both of these forms are in the group referred to as Garden Sunbird.



Another view of one of the lovely juvenile Philippine Scops Owls from Subic Bay (Pete Morris)

APPENDIX 1

TOP 10 BIRDS OF THE TOUR



Our friend, the Palawan Peacock-Pheasant... gone, but never forgotten! (Pete Morris)

- 1st PHILIPPINE EAGLE
- 2nd PALAWAN PEACOCK-PHEASANT
- 3rd SOUTHERN SILVERY KINGFISHER
- 4th Japanese Night Heron
- 5th Ashy Thrush
- 6th Luzon Scops Owl
- 7th Eastern Grass Owl
- 8th Azure-breasted Pitta
- 9th Rufous Hornbill
- 10th Flame-breasted Fruit Dove

A total of 36 species received at least one vote!



A couple that were in or hovering around the top ten: Flame-breasted Fruit Dove (Pete Morris), and Scale-feathered Malkoha (Julien Mazenauer)

