

# REMOTE ISLANDS OF THE BANDA SEA TOUR REPORT 2023

8 - 21 / 24 November 2023

by Craig Robson

The second Birdquest cruise through the remote islands of the Banda Sea proved to be another great success, with all of the major targets tracked-down without too much difficulty. Some of our best birds included: Tanimbar Megapode, Flores Sea Cuckoo-Dove, Wetar Ground Dove, Wallace's Fruit Dove, Flores Hawk-Eagle, Little Curlew, Oriental Plover, Australian (or Southern B), Alor and Tanimbar Boobooks, Wetar Scops Owl, Tanimbar Corella, Tanimbar Eclectus, Ornate, Elegant and Banda Sea Pittas, Wetar, Banda and Alor Myzomelas, Grey (or Kisar) Friarbird, Black-necklaced Honeyeater, Wetar Figbird, Wetar Oriole, Tanahjampea and Black-bibbed Monarchs, Tanimbar Bush Warbler, the Timor form of Javan Bush Warbler (formerly a distinct species), Violet-hooded Starling, Fawn-breasted, Orange-sided and Slaty-backed Thrushes, Tanahjampea and Kalao Blue Flycatchers (the former surprisingly still included in Sulawesi), Tanimbar and Damar Flycatchers, and Tricolored Parrotfinch. A wide range of expected seabirds included Aleutian Tern, many Red-tailed Tropicbirds (the only tropicbird observed during this tour), good numbers of Tahiti Petrels in their non-breeding haunts, and several Heinroth's Shearwaters. As for the mammals, we had many observations of Blue Whale, with at least 28 individuals noted, and some amazingly close views. Other expected species like Indo-Pacific Bottlenose, Spinner and Pantropical Spotted Dolphins were also seen well, as was Short-finned Pilot Whale, and we also had two distant Sperm Whales. The seas were incredibly calm throughout, and we found ourselves in the doldrums on a number of occasions, with no visible horizon and the glassy-calm ocean merging into the clear sky. Only during our final journey from Babar to Yamdena did we encounter any obvious 'waves', and then only something we would call "relatively calm" in the North Sea! The ship was luxurious and very comfortable, and we were served three excellent and varied meals every day! The large crew did a great job of making the cruise as enjoyable as possible for us.

We all met up at the hotel in Labuan Bajo prior to the scheduled tour start-time the following morning. Craig and Heidi had found a roosting Ornate Pitta in the garden, so we walked down to the entrance road predawn. The bird was already vocalizing and, as it got light, we were able to get some very nice views. After boarding the Lady Denok mid-morning, we headed-off across calm seas towards our first destination, the island of Tanahjampea, off the south coast of south-west Sulawesi, in the Flores Sea. A nice variety of common and expected seabirds were seen during the crossing.

We were ashore early on Tanahjampea, where a local guide showed us a couple of handy trails. We were soon lapping-up close views of the endemic Tanahjampea Monarch and Tanahjampea Blue Flycatcher (the latter currently lumped in Sulawesi Blue). The local form of Elegant Pitta was

responsive, with one posing for lengthy scope views. Other interesting birds included the somewhat wider-ranging Flores Sea Cuckoo-Dove and Flores Sea Sunbird (the latter still lumped in Olive-backed by some), as well as Oriental Cuckoo, Black-naped Fruit Dove, Brown Goshawk, Sulawesi Myzomela, Island Monarch, and Lemon-bellied White-eye. We also made a point of seeing as many of the other local subspecies as possible, which included Black-naped Oriole, Arafura (or Supertramp) Fantail, and Blue-cheeked (or Red-chested) Flowerpecker.

From Tanahjampea it was just a short hop over to Kalao, and we were already ashore and birding by the early afternoon. Along the coast we found Beach Stone-curlew and Malaysian Plovers, but our main target, the very distinctive endemic Kalao Blue Flycatcher, simply required us to walk to the forest edge (and the island is mostly forested), where we had great looks at several individuals. Other good birds during the afternoon included Orange-footed Megapode and several Yellow-crested Cockatoos and Great-billed Parrots. Two distant Common Spotted Cuscuses were of interest, but are presumably introduced here.

We set off once more at dinner time, for the overnight journey south-east to Kalaotoa. We were ashore and birding at dawn. This seldom-visited island, handily situated along our route, has no endemic species, but we did observe the local forms of Rufous-sided Gerygone and Arafura (or Supertramp) Fantail. Flores Sea Cuckoo-Dove and Elegant Pitta both gave amazing views, while Pink-headed Imperial Pigeon, Osprey, Brown Goshawk, Rusty-breasted Whistler, and an unexpected Oriental Reed Warbler in tide-line vegetation, were also noteworthy. Raising the anchor at 11:30, we continued our journey south-eastwards towards Pantar. There were good numbers of commoner seabirds, as we rounded the north coast of Kalaotoa, and on the open ocean, we were fortunate to spot our first Heinroth's Shearwaters – one of the star seabirds of this tour. Towards dusk, a Red-footed Booby alighted on top of the ship's tallest mast, and settled-in for the night!

Dawn saw us cruising along the north coast of Lembata and, after an early lunch, we were transported to the jetty on Pantar. Walking south along easy trails and small roads, we observed Timor Cuckoo-Dove, our first Barred Doves, a flyby Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher, Rainbow Bee-eaters, Sunda Pygmy Woodpecker, Brown (or Indonesian) Honeyeater, the distinctive Alor Cuckooshrike (currently lumped by some in Wallacean), Rusty-breasted Whistler, Arafura (or Supertramp) Fantail, Flores Spangled (or Wallacean) Drongo, Tree Martin, Black-fronted Flowerpecker, and our first gaudy Flame-breasted Sunbirds. Positioning ourselves at a likely spot at dusk, it wasn't too long before we were enjoying superb walk-away views of the near-endemic Alor Boobook. We were soon back aboard ship and, after dinner, we embarked on the six-hour journey to the nearby island of Alor.

We had to travel well into the interior of the island in order to reach the highest levels, so we were taken ashore well before dawn. Travelling in comfortable cars, and then a relatively shorter distance in a village people-carrier, we reached the high-level Eucalypt forests not that long after sunrise, and started looking out for birds as we ate breakfast. First up was the distinct endemic Alor Myzomela, which performed admirably, followed by much better views of Alor (or Wallacean) Cuckooshrike. Further on, we spent a long while obtaining good views of the local form of Javan Bush (or Sunda Grasshopper) Warbler, which was once split-off as a distinct species – Timor Bush Warbler. Casually continuing downhill, we added Eucalypt Cuckoo-Dove, and local forms of Timor Stubtail and Aberrant (or Sunda) Bush Warbler. After a simple lunch we followed a ridge downhill to lower levels. It was sad to see so many fires being set, and so much habitat being trashed. Nevertheless, we had good scope views of several Yellow-crested Cockatoos, and right at the last,

Heidi spotted a perched Flores Hawk-Eagle which was very well received by all, with prolonged scope views. Having seen everything that we expected to, we returned to the Lady Denok, for a comfortable night's rest. An Eastern Barn Owl that posed in our headlights, right by the road, was an additional bonus.

Once up on deck first thing the following morning, we were greeted by several amazing Blue Whales, that twice swam right past the ship and into the head of the bay. It was astonishing how far inshore they could swim, even passing between fishermen in their tiny one-man boats. Come late morning, we were on our way again, this time en route to the north coast of Wetar. Seawatching intently once again, we added our first of many Red-tailed Tropicbirds, and the usual range of expected regional seabirds, including Wilson's Storm and Bulwer's Petrels. We also obtained our best views of Heinroth's Shearwater, which we were able to approach to fairly close range before it took flight. We arrived at the offshore islet of Pulau Reong around 23:00, and moored there for the night. Those that were eager to snorkel had their first chance the following morning, before we continued eastwards along the north coast of Wetar to our landing point. A nice Aleutian Tern, perched on some flotsam, was enjoyed en route.

Wetar is a large and scenically spectacular island with a low human population, and this is especially true of the north coast. There are more endemic birds here than on any other island visited during the main tour, so we were itching to get ashore. Birding through some nice forest, we soon found Wetar Oriole, the handsome Black-necklaced Honeyeater, Wetar Myzomela, and Wetar Figbird. Top of the list though was the superb Wetar Ground Dove that perched right above us, one of the region's most sought-after specialities. This near-endemic is only really seeable right here, or in remote parts of Timor-Leste. After dark, we soon heard the distinctive voice of Wetar Scops Owl, which quickly gave wonderful views. A fitting conclusion to a very eventful afternoon. We had the whole of the following day to enjoy most of these species again, and we also found Timor and Slaty Cuckoo-Doves, numerous Pink-headed as well as the more secretive Timor Imperial Pigeon, Black-backed and Rose-crowned Fruit Doves, Bonelli's Eagle (of the isolated Lesser Sundas form, Rensch's Eagle), Cinnamon-banded Kingfisher, Jonquil (or Olive-shouldered) and Red-cheeked Parrots, numerous Marigold and the more fleeting Iris Lorikeet, Plain Gerygone, Fawn-breasted and Yellow-throated Whistlers, the Timor form of Northern Fantail (sometimes split), the likewise sometimes-split Timor Spangled (or Wallacean) Drongo, Timor Stubtail, Timor Blue Flycatcher, the lovely Orange-sided Thrush, Tenggara Flowerpecker (the local, splittable form of Thick-billed), Flame-breasted Sunbird, Sunda Zebra Finch, and Tricolored Parrotfinch. After nightfall we tried our best to see a vocalizing Timor Nightjar, but distant eyeshine was the best we could manage amidst inaccessible treetops.

After dinner, we embarked on the 19-hour journey to Leti. Much of the following day was spent seawatching, but there were unfortunately few things out of the ordinary – more of the expected seabirds of the region, punctuated by a number of Red-tailed Tropicbirds.

We reached Leti by mid-afternoon and headed ashore in search of more new birds. Leti was the flattest and driest island we visited during the cruise, but it is definitely a 'birdy' spot. The star bird was of course Grey (or Kisar) Friarbird, which is endemic to Leti and two other adjacent islands. Another bird of particular interest was the distinctive compar form of Yellow-throated Whistler, with its female-like males. Placing this form in Fawn-breasted Whistler, as in Birds of the Indonesian Archipelago, seems a better solution, at least in the short-term. Other good birds noted during the late afternoon and our early morning visit the following day, included local forms of Banded (or Black-backed) and Rose-crowned Fruit Doves, Cinnamon-banded Kingfisher,

refreshingly good numbers of Olive-headed Lorikeets, large numbers of Scaly-breasted Honeyeaters, Rufous-sided Gerygone, Wallacean Cuckooshrikes (of the form personata), local forms of Northern and Arafura (or Supertramp) Fantails (the former with an occupied nest), and masses of Ashy-bellied White-eyes. After dusk and before dawn, we focussed on getting to grips with the local Australian (or Southern) Boobooks (form moae), but the views were quite poor, there was a lot of disturbance, and the birds were very flighty.

The journey north-east to Pulau Damar was again typical seabird-wise. We dropped anchor in the bay shortly after midnight, and were already ashore at dawn the next day, making our way uphill into the islands interior along a narrow old road. The bird that everyone wants to see on Damar is of course the 'long-lost' Damar Flycatcher that was only relatively recently rediscovered by a BirdLife expedition in 2001, having not been recorded since its discovery 103 years earlier. These rather inquisitive and confiding birds are thankfully not too difficult to find in the remaining natural forest, and it was still early morning when we set eyes on our first. The best of the rest, during our few hours ashore, included Metallic Pigeon, Timor Cuckoo-Dove, Elegant Imperial Pigeon, the Damar form of Yellow-throated Whistler (sometimes treated as Golden Whistler), Wallacean Whistler, Northern and Arafura (or Supertramp) Fantails, our first Black-bibbed Monarchs, more Orange-sided Thrushes, the local form of Blue-cheeked (or Red-chested) Flowerpecker, and Black-faced Munia. As we left the bay, just before lunch, we admired the twin peaks of volcanic Gunung Wurlali with its sulphur-spewing fumaroles.

The daytime crossing south-eastwards to Babar, was rather quiet for seabirds, despite our intense scanning of the ocean, and we anchored off Tapa, on the west coast, at around 22:00. Five hours later, we were heading ashore to begin another birding day with some predawn owling. A local guide took us to some good spots for the island's form of Australasian (or Southern) Boobook, and within a surprisingly short period of time, we had spotlighted three, with several superb looks at one particular individual. Exploring a number of nice spots before it got too hot to bird, we also enjoyed the local form of Variable Goshawk, Banda Myzomela, Wallacean Whistler, Cinnamon-tailed and Arafura (or Supertramp) Fantails, Black-bibbed Monarch, Orange-sided Thrush, the local form of Blue-cheeked (or Red-chested) Flowerpecker, and some very showy Tricolored Parrotfinches. Before and after lunch, we tried a different area where Banded Fruit Dove, Cinnamon-banded Kingfisher, Rufous-sided Gerygone, Babar Whistler (the splittable local form of Yellow-throated), and Timor Stubtail were all seen well.

We raised the anchor in the early hours of the following morning, and headed towards Yamdena, in the Tanimbar Islands. We were already seawatching at dawn, as we knew that this day would be our best chance of seeing Tahiti Petrels. It proved to be so, as we counted at least nine individuals in their favourite stretch of ocean halfway between Babar and the southern tip of Yamdena. At around dinner time, we moored off Pulau Burung, to the west of the north end of Pulau Anggarmase (Angwarmase Island Nature Reserve).

Early morning the following day saw some of us snorkelling, while others birded around Pulau Burung by small boat. There was plenty see, with five Pied Oystercatchers, three Beach Thick-knees, a wintering flock of Far Eastern Curlews, and a single White-faced Heron amongst the many egrets. Pied Imperial Pigeons were also very much in evidence. We travelled a relatively short distance to the east, where a small rocky islet held a roosting mixed flock of around 150 Lesser and Great Frigatebirds, which swarmed overhead, and a big flock of breeding Brown Boobies included many fresh juveniles.

The main tour drew to a close as we reached the harbour at Saumlaki, Yamdena, and we bade farewell to the crew of the Lady Denok, who had done such a fantastic job of taking care of us.

Those of us who were taking the Tanimbar Islands extension made our way to the hotel and, after lunch and a turn-around, we headed out for an afternoons birding. The main island of Yamdena still has plenty of forest, although deforestation along the few main roads is an issue. Additionally, this year, there were also many uncontrolled fires that were causing a considerable amount of air pollution. Nonetheless, there is plenty of good habitat not far from Saumlaki, and we were soon out exploring the forest trails.

Most of the Tanimbar endemics were easy or at least straightforward to find during our stay, including Tanimbar Cuckoo-Dove, the raucous Tanimbar Corella, Blue-streaked Lory, Tanimbar Friarbird, Tanimbar Oriole, White-browed (or Tanimbar) Triller, Tanimbar Monarch, Golden-bellied (or Tanimbar) Flyrobin, Long-tailed (or Charming) and Cinnamon-tailed Fantails, Tanimbar Bush Warbler, and Tanimbar Starling. Three other smart endemics that we especially enjoyed were the striking Slaty-backed Thrush, the furtive Fawn-breasted Thrush, and the lovely little Tanimbar Flycatcher. Two trickier endemics, Tanimbar Eclectus and Violet-hooded Starling were found by scanning from a likely vantage point; though the latter was later scoped at close range. We were even fortunate enough to come across some Tanimbar Megapodes which came trundling through the noisy leaf-litter towards us. Unfortunately, an impromptu shuffle was enough to startle them before they had been seen well by all of us. We were also taken to a mound by a local guide, but we had been mis-informed, and it was no longer active – probably due to all the adults having been trapped for food. We also had great views of Pied Bronze Cuckoo (endemic to Tanimbar and Kai if split from Little), the stunning range-restricted Wallace's Fruit Dove, the xanthogaster form of Rose-crowned Fruit Dove, Elegant Imperial Pigeon, Cinnamon-banded Kingfisher, Banda Sea Pitta right out in the open on a trail, Banda (or Tanimbar) Myzomela, Scaly-breasted (or White-tufted) Honeyeaters, Rufous-sided Gerygone, Wallacean Whistler, Arafura (or Supertramp) Fantail, and Black-bibbed Monarch. In addition, Tanimbar Boobook put on a great display for us after dark, peering at us from close range, but unfortunately the local form of Moluccan Masked Owl somehow managed to evade us.

Before we knew it, the trip was coming to an end and, as we waited for our outbound flights, we were able to reflect back on a most enjoyable tour.

## **BIRDS OF THE TOUR**

1st: Damar Flycatcher

2nd: Elegant Pitta

3rd: Wetar Ground Dove

4th: Alor Boobook

5th: Wallace's Fruit Dove

## 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).

The species names and taxonomy used in the bird list follows Gill, F., Donsker, D., & Rasmussen, P. (Eds). **2023. IOC World Bird List (v13.2)** (this was the current version when the checklist for the tour report was created).

Where the subspecies seen is/are known, these are often given in parentheses at the end of the species comment.

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

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

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

## BIRDS

**Wandering Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna arcuata* Six at Saumlaki Airport Lake.

**Sunda Teal** ◊ *Anas gibberifrons* A pair in the hotel grounds at Labuan Bajo.

**Tanimbar Megapode** ◊ (T Scrubfowl) *Megapodius tenimberensis* Endemic. Seen well by some on Yamdena.

**Orange-footed Scrubfowl** *Megapodius reinwardt* One on Kalao; heard on Kalaotoa.

**Red Junglefowl (introduced)** *Gallus gallus* Heard only. Several on Wetar.

**Timor Nightjar** ◊ *Caprimulgus sp. nov.* Very poor views of one on Wetar.

**Large-tailed Nightjar** *Caprimulgus macrurus* Seen well on Babar.

**Mees's Nightjar** ◊ *Caprimulgus meesi* Heard only. One on Alor.

**Savanna Nightjar** *Caprimulgus affinis* Seen well on Leti.

**Drab Swiftlet** ◊ *Collocalia neglecta* Pantar to Babar.

**Glossy Swiftlet** *Collocalia esculenta* Kalao and Yamdena.

**Uniform Swiftlet** *Aerodramus vanikorensis* Ten or so on Damar.

**Edible-nest Swiftlet** *Aerodramus fuciphagus* Widespread.

**Pacific Swift** *Apus pacificus* Flores to Wetar, in good numbers.

**Lesser Coucal** *Centropus bengalensis*

**Asian Koel** *Eudynamys scolopacea* Heard-only. Labuan Bajo.

**Pacific Koel** *Eudynamys orientalis* Seen on Pantar and Wetar.

**Little Bronze Cuckoo (Gould's B C)** *Chrysococcyx [minutillus] jungei* Several seen on Wetar; also on Kalaotoa.

**Little Bronze Cuckoo** ◊ (Banda B C) *C. [m.] rufomerus* Leti and Damar [heard] (*rufomerus*), & Babar (*salvadorii*).

**Little Bronze Cuckoo** ◊ (Pied B C) *Chrysococcyx [minutillus] crassirostris* Endemic. Super views on Yamdena.

**Brush Cuckoo (Australian B C)** *Cacomantis [variolosus] variolosus*

**Oriental Cuckoo** *Cuculus optatus* Singles on Tanahjampea, Pantar, Alor, and Damar.

**Sunda Cuckoo** *Cuculus lepidus* Heard only. One or two on Wetar.

**Rock Dove (introduced)** *Columba livia*

**Metallic Pigeon** *Columba vitiensis* One on Damar.

**Sunda Collared Dove** ◊ *Streptopelia bitorquata* One singing in the grounds of our Labuan Bajo Hotel.

**Spotted Dove** *Spilopelia chinensis*

**Timor Cuckoo-Dove** ◊ *Macropygia magna* Found on Tanahjampea, Pantar, Alor, and Damar.

**Tanimbar Cuckoo-Dove** ◊ *Macropygia timorlaoensis* Endemic. Common.

**Flores Sea Cuckoo-Dove** ◊ *Macropygia macassariensis* Endemic. Well seen Tanahjampea & Kalaotoa; hrd. Kalao.

**Eucalypt Cuckoo Dove** ◊ *Macropygia sp. nov.* Rather fleeting views on Alor.

**Black Cuckoo-Dove** ◊ *Turacoena modesta* Easily seen on Wetar.

**Common Emerald Dove (Asian E D)** *Chalcophaps indica*

**Pacific Emerald Dove** *Chalcophaps longirostris*

**Barred Dove** ◊ *Geopelia maugeus*

**Wetar Ground Dove** ◊ *Pampusana hoedtii* Endemic. A superb tame individual on Wetar.

**Pink-necked Green Pigeon** *Treron vernans* Ten on Tanahjampea.

**Banded Fruit Dove** ◊ (Black-backed F D) *Ptilinopus cinctus* Wetar (n nominate); Leti (*lettiensis*); Babar (*ottonis*).

**Wallace's Fruit Dove** ◊ *Ptilinopus wallacii* Endemic. Common on Yamdena.

**Rose-crowned Fruit Dove** ♦ *P. regina* Seen Leti & Wetar (*roseipileum*); Damar, Babar & Yamdena (*xanthogaster*).

**Black-naped Fruit Dove** *Ptilinopus melanospilus*

**Elegant Imperial Pigeon** ♦ *Ducula concinna* Seen on Kalaotoa, Babar and Yamdena; heard on Damar.

**Pink-headed Imperial Pigeon** ♦ *D. rosacea* Numerous Wetar; also Kalaotoa, Pantar, Leti & Yamdena. Heard Damar.

**Timor Imperial Pigeon** ♦ *Ducula cineracea* Several on Wetar, but only in flight.

**Pied Imperial Pigeon** *Ducula bicolor* 80 noted on Pulau Burung, off Yamdena.

**Australasian Swamphen** *Porphyrio melanotus* One on Yamdena.

**White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus*

**Pale-vented Bush-hen** *Amaurornis moluccana* One flushed on Yamdena.

**Beach Stone-curlew (B Thick-knee)** *Esacus magnirostris* One on Kalaotoa; three Pulau Burung.

**Pied Oystercatcher** *Haematopus longirostris* Five on Pulau Burung.

**Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*

**Malaysian Plover** *Charadrius peronii* A pair on Kalao.

**Oriental Plover** ♦ *Charadrius veredus* One on the runway at Saumlaki Airport.

**Eurasian Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

**Little Curlew** ♦ *Numenius minutus* Two at Saumlaki Airport Lake.

**Far Eastern Curlew (Eastern C)** *Numenius madagascariensis* A roosting flock of 23 at Pulau Burung, off Saumlaki.

**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* Non-leader.

**Black-tailed Godwit (Eastern Black-t G)** *Limosa [limosa] melanuroides* One at Saumlaki Airport Lake.

**Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

**Grey-tailed Tattler** *Tringa brevipes*

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

**Australian Pratincole** *Stiltia isabella* Five at Saumlaki Airport.



**Oriental Pratincole** *Glareola maldivarum* Nine heading south at sea, Babar-Yamdena. 53+ Saumlaki Airport/Lake.

**Brown Noddy** *Anous stolidus*

**Greater Crested Tern** *Thalasseus bergii*

**Little Tern** *Sternula albifrons*

**Aleutian Tern** ♦ *Onychoprion aleuticus* One seen well off the north coast of Wetar.

**Bridled Tern** *Onychoprion anaethetus*

**Black-naped Tern** *Sterna sumatrana*

**Common Tern (Eastern C T)** *Sterna [hirundo] longipennis*

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida*

**White-winged Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus*

**Pomarine Jaeger (P Skua)** *Stercorarius pomarinus* One at sea.

**Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua)** *Stercorarius parasiticus* Four at sea.

**Red-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon rubricauda* 13 identified at sea.

**Wilson's Storm Petrel** *Oceanites oceanicus* Just two individuals.

**Tahiti Petrel** ♦ *Pseudobulweria rostrata* A total of nine during the crossing from Babar to Yamdena.

**Streaked Shearwater** *Calonectris leucomelas* A total of seven seen.

**Heinroth's Shearwater** ♦ *Puffinus heinrothi* Two singles; Kalaotoa-Pantar and Alor-Wetar.

**Bulwer's Petrel** *Bulweria bulwerii* At least 19 during our seawatches.

**Great Frigatebird** *Fregata minor*

**Lesser Frigatebird** *Fregata ariel*

**Red-footed Booby** *Sula sula*

**Brown Booby (Forster's B B)** *Sula [leucogaster] plotus*

**Little Pied Cormorant** *Microcarbo melanoleucos*

**Little Black Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

**Nankeen Night Heron (Rufous N H)** *Nycticorax caledonicus*

**Striated Heron** *Butorides striata*

**Eastern Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus coromandus*

**Great Egret (Eastern G E) *Ardea [alba] modesta***

**Intermediate Egret (Plumed E) *Ardea [intermedia] plumifera***

**Pied Heron *Egretta picata*** Small numbers in Saumlaki Bay.

**White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae*** One with Pacific Reef Herons on Pulau Burung.

**Little Egret (Australasian L E) *Egretta [garzetta] nigripes***

**Pacific Reef Heron (P R Egret) *Egretta sacra***

**Osprey (Australasian O) *Pandion [haliaetus] cristatus*** Two at Kalao, and one at Kalaotoa.

**Crested Honey Buzzard (Oriental H B) *Pernis [ptilorhynchus] orientalis***

**Pacific Baza *Aviceda subcristata*** One at Kalao (*timorlaeensis*).

**Flores Hawk-Eagle ♦ *Nisaetus floris*** One scoped on Alor.

**Bonelli's Eagle ♦ (Rensch's E) *Aquila [fasciata] renschii*** Five seen on Wetar and another on Yamdena.

**Variable Goshawk ♦ (Banda G) *Accipiter [hiogaster] polionotus*** Seen very well on Babar; heard Yamdena.

**Brown Goshawk *A. fasciatus*** J. Labuan Bajo (*wallacii*); Tanahjampea (1), Kalao (1), Kalaotoa (ad., j.) (*stresemanni*).

**Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus***

**White-bellied Sea Eagle (W-b Fish E) *Ichthyophaga leucogaster***

**Moluccan Masked Owl ♦ (Lesser M O, Tanimbar M O) *Tyto [sororcula] sororcula*** Heard-only. Two on Yamdena.

**Eastern Barn Owl *Tyto javanica*** Great views of one on Alor; heard on Babar.

**Australian Boobook (Southern B) *Ninox boobook*** 2-3 flight birds on Leti (*moae*); 3 seen well Babar (*cinnamomina*).

**Alor Boobook ♦ *Ninox plesseni*** Endemic. Superb walk-away views of one on Pantar.

**Tanimbar Boobook ♦ *Ninox forbesi*** Endemic. Brilliant views of one on Yamdena, and many heard.

**Wetar Scops Owl ♦ *Otus tempestatis*** Endemic. Two seen well, and three heard.

**Oriental Dollarbird (Common D) *Eurystomus orientalis***

**Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis*** One by the hotel at Labuan Bajo (*floresiana*).

**Collared Kingfisher *Todiramphus chloris***

**Sacred Kingfisher** *Todiramphus sanctus* Just one on Tanahjampea.

**Cinnamon-banded Kingfisher** ♦ *Todiramphus australasia* Seen well Wetar (nominate), Leti (*interpositus*), Damar and Babar (*dammerianus*), and Yamdena (*odites*).

**Common Kingfisher** ♦ (Cobalt-eared K, Hispid K) *Alcedo [atthis] hispidoides* A few, Tanahjampea and Wetar.

**Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher (Rufous-backed K)** *Ceyx erithaca* A flyby on Pantar.

**Blue-tailed Bee-eater** *Merops philippinus*

**Rainbow Bee-eater** *Merops ornatus*

**Sunda Pygmy Woodpecker** ♦ *Yungipicus moluccensis* One on Pantar, and two on Alor (*grandis*).

**Spotted Kestrel** ♦ (Indonesian K) *Falco moluccensis*

**Australian Hobby** *Falco longipennis* One on Wetar.

**Tanimbar Corella** ♦ (T Cockatoo) *Cacatua goffiniana* Endemic. Common, with nearly 40 logged on Yamdena.

**Yellow-crested Cockatoo** ♦ *Cacatua sulphurea* Three on Kalao (*djampeana*), and five on Alor (*occidentalis*).

**Jonquil Parrot** ♦ (Olive-shouldered P) *Aprosmictus jonquillaceus* A few seen & heard on Wetar (*wetterensis*).

**Tanimbar Eclectus** ♦ *Eclectus riedeli* Just a pair seen well in flight on Yamdena.

**Red-cheeked Parrot** *Geoffroyus geoffroyi* Many on Wetar (nominate) and Yamdena (*timorlaeensis*).

**Great-billed Parrot** ♦ *Tanygnathus megalorhynchus* Two on both Kalao (nominate) and Yamdena (*subaffinis*).

**Iris Lorikeet** ♦ *Saudareos iris* A few fleeting flybys on Wetar.

**Blue-streaked Lory** ♦ *Eos reticulata* Endemic. Common on Yamdena, with 65 logged.

**Olive-headed Lorikeet** ♦ *Trichoglossus euteles* Locally common – Alor, Leti and Babar; heard Pantar and Damar.

**Marigold Lorikeet** ♦ *Trichoglossus capistratus* Common on Wetar.

**Ornate Pitta** ♦ (Wallace's Elegant P) *Pitta concinna* One seen well near Labuan Bajo; heard on Pantar and Alor.

**Elegant Pitta** ♦ (Temminck's Elegant P) *Pitta elegans* Showed well on Tanahjampea & Kalaotoa, with seven seen.

**Banda Sea Pitta** ♦ (B Elegant P) *Pitta vigorsii* Endemic. One or two seen well and a handful heard on Yamdena.

**Wetar Myzomela** ♦ *Myzomela kuehni* Endemic. Quite common on Wetar; 14 logged.

**Alor Myzomela** ♦ *Myzomela prawiradilagae* Endemic. Just one in the Alor uplands, but seen very well.

**Banda Myzomela** ♦ (Tanimbar M) *Myzomela [boiei] annabellae* Four seen on Babar and another on Yamdena.

**Sulawesi Myzomela** ♦ *Myzomela chloroptera* One seen briefly on Tanahjampea (*eva*).

**Grey Friarbird** ♦ (Kisar F) *Philemon kisserensis* Endemic. Easily seen on Leti, with nine noted.

**Tanimbar Friarbird** ♦ *Philemon plumigenis* Endemic. Common on Yamdena, with c.20 noted.

**Helmeted Friarbird (Tenggara F)** *Philemon buceroides* Small numbers on Pantar, Alor, and Wetar (nominate).

**Brown Honeyeater** ♦ (Indonesian H) *Lichmera [indistincta] limbata* Small numbers on Pantar and Alor.

**Scaly-breasted Honeyeater** ♦ (White-tufted H) *L. squamata* Endemic. Abundant Leti, Damar, Babar, Yamdena.

**Black-necklaced Honeyeater** ♦ *Lichmera notabilis* Quite common during our time on Wetar, with 35 estimated.

**Golden-bellied Gerygone** *Gerygone sulphurea* A couple at Labuan Bajo; heard on Alor (nominate).

**Rufous-sided Gerygone** ♦ (Banda Sea G) *G. dorsalis* Endemic. Seen well on Kalaotoa (*senex*), Damar (*kuehni*), Leti and Babar (*fulvescens*), and Yamdena (nominate).

**Plain Gerygone** ♦ (Timor G) *Gerygone inornata* Small numbers on Wetar.

**White-breasted Woodswallow** *Artamus leucorhynchus*

**Wallacean Cuckooshrike** ♦ (Timor C) *Coracina [personata] personata* Small numbers on Wetar and Leti.

**Wallacean Cuckooshrike** ♦ (Tanimbar C) *Coracina [personata] unimoda* Endemic. Heard-only. Yamdena.

**Wallacean Cuckooshrike** ♦ (Alor C) *Coracina [personata] alfrediana* Endemic. Two seen Pantar, and three Alor.

**White-shouldered Triller** ♦ (Lesueur's T) *Lalage sueurii* Widespread and frequently encountered east to Babar.

**White-browed Triller** ♦ (Tanimbar T) *Lalage moesta* Endemic. Small numbers seen well on Yamdena.

- Fawn-breasted Whistler** ♦ *Pachycephala orpheus* Common on Wetar.
- Rusty-breasted Whistler** ♦ (Flores Sea W) *Pachycephala [fulvotincta] everetti* Several seen on Kalaotoa.
- Rusty-breasted Whistler** ♦ (Bima W) *Pachycephala [fulvotincta] fulvotincta* A few Pantar & Alor; hrd. Labuan Bajo.
- Yellow-throated Whistler** ♦ (Wetar W) *P. [macrorhyncha] arthuri* Endemic. A few on Wetar (= *calliope* of I.O.C.).
- Yellow-throated Whistler** ♦ (Babar W) *Pachycephala [macrorhyncha] sharpei* Endemic. Four seen on Babar,
- Yellow-throated Whistler** ♦ (Damar W) *Pachycephala [macrorhyncha] dammeriana* Endemic. One on Damar.
- Yellow-throated Whistler** ♦ (Leti W) *P. [m.] compar* Endemic. Common Leti (= Fawn-breasted in Eaton *et. al.*).
- Wallacean Whistler** ♦ *Pachycephala arctitorquis* Easily seen Damar & Babar (*kebirensis*), & Yamdena (n nominate).
- Wetar Figbird** ♦ *Sphecotheres hypoleucus* Endemic. Not uncommon and seen very well; 16 logged.
- Wetar Oriole** ♦ *Oriolus finschi* Endemic. Ditto, with nine noted.
- Tanimbar Oriole** ♦ *Oriolus decipiens* Endemic. This amazingly friarbird-like oriole was common on Yamdena.
- Black-naped Oriole** ♦ (Flores Sea Golden O) *O. [chinensis] boneratensis* Many on Tanahjampea & Kalaotoa.
- Black-naped Oriole** ♦ (Tenggara Golden O) *Oriolus [chinensis] broderipi* Four seen on Alor.
- Wallacean Drongo** ♦ (Flores Spangled D) *Dicrurus [densus] bimaensis* Seen at Labuan Bajo, Pantar and Alor.
- Wallacean Drongo** ♦ (Timor Spangled D) *Dicrurus [densus] densus* Small numbers on Wetar.
- Wallacean Drongo** ♦ (Tanimbar Spangled D) *Dicrurus [densus] kuehni* Endemic. Only seen by Vinno on Yamdena.
- Cinnamon-tailed Fantail** ♦ *Rhipidura fusciorufa* Endemic. A few seen well on Babar and Yamdena.
- Northern Fantail** ♦ (Timor F) *Rhipidura rufiventris* A few seen well on Wetar (*pallidiceps*).
- Northern Fantail** ♦ (Banda Sea F) *Rhipidura [rufiventris] hoedti* Endemic. A few on Leti (incl. ad. on nest) & Damar.

**Long-tailed Fantail** ◊ (Charming F) *Rhipidura opistherythra* Endemic. A few of these unusual fantails on Yamdena.

**Arafura Fantail** ◊ (Supertramp F) *Rhipidura [dryas] semicollaris* Tanahjampea & Kalao (*celebensis*), Kalaotoa (*mimosae*), Pantar, Alor & Wetar (*semicollaris*), Leti & Damar (*elegantula*), Babar (*reichenowi*), Yamdena (*hamadryas*).

**Black-naped Monarch** *Hypothymis azurea* A pair near Labuan Bajo, and two on Pantar (*symmixta*).

**Black-bibbed Monarch** ◊ (Banda Sea M) *Symposiachrus mundus* Endemic. Seen on Damar, Babar, and Yamdena.

**Spectacled Monarch** ◊ (Australian S M) *Symposiachrus trivirgatus* Four noted on Wetar (nominate).

**Tanahjampea Monarch** ◊ *Symposiachrus everetti* Endemic. Pleasantly common and easy to see, with 12 noted.

**Island Monarch** ◊ *Monarcha cinerascens* Smaller island specialist; seen Tanahjampea, Kalao, Kalaotoa, Yamdena.

**Tanimbar Monarch** ◊ *Carterornis castus* Several seen well on Yamdena.

**Broad-billed Flycatcher** *Myiagra ruficollis* Frequent Tanahjampea-Wetar (nominate), and on Yamdena (*fulviventris*).

**Long-tailed Shrike** *Lanius schach* Two seen on Wetar (*bentet*).

**Large-billed Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos* Singles near Labuan Bajo and on Alor.

**Golden-bellied Flyrobin** ◊ (Tanimbar F) *Microeca hemixantha* Endemic. Just a few on Yamdena; strangely scarce.

**Cinereous Tit** *Parus cinereus* A few on Pantar and Alor (nominate).

**Sooty-headed Bulbul (introduced)** *Pycnonotus aurigaster* Five or so on Alor (nominate).

**Pacific Swallow** *Hirundo tahitica*

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

**Striated Swallow** *Cecropis striolata* Breeding at the hotel near Labuan Bajo; 25 or so.

**Tree Martin** *Petrochelidon nigricans* Small numbers on Pantar and Alor (*timoriensis*).

**Tanimbar Bush Warbler** ◊ *Horornis carolinae* Endemic. Several on Yamdena, with one ridiculously tame individual.

**Aberrant Bush Warbler** ◊ (Sunda B W) *H. [flavolivaceus] vulcanius* Seen Alor (*kolochisi*); heard Wetar (*everetti*).

**Timor Stubtail** ◊ *Urosphena subulata* Seen on Alor (ssp.?), Wetar (ssp.?), and Babar (*advena*).

**Oriental Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus orientalis* A migrant in coastal vegetation on Kalaotoa.

**Timor Leaf Warbler** ♦ *Phylloscopus presbytes* Heard-only. Once on Wetar.

**Javan Bush Warbler** ♦ (Timor Grasshopper W) *Locustella [montis] timorensis* Brilliant views Alor. 1 of 3 singing.

**Tawny Grassbird** *Cincloramphus timoriensis* Quite common on Yamdena (*timoriensis?*).

**Yellow-ringed White-eye (Wallace's Heleia)** *Heleia wallacei* A pair near Labuan Bajo.

**Lemon-bellied White-eye** ♦ (Sombre W) *Zosterops [chloris] intermedius* Common on Tanahjampea, Kalao, Kalaotoa (*intermedius*), and Pantar (*intermedius*; or *sumbavensis* in Eaton *et. al.*).

**Ashy-bellied White-eye** ♦ *Z. citrinella* Alor (*harterti*); Wetar-Yamdena (*albiventris* [=griseiventris Eaton *et. al.*]).

**Violet-hooded Starling** ♦ *Aplonis circumscripta* Endemic. Some good views on Yamdena, with 16 logged.

**Tanimbar Starling** ♦ *Aplonis crassa* Endemic. Over 50 noted on Yamdena.

**Short-tailed Starling** *Aplonis minor* Small numbers on Alor and Wetar (nominate).

**Fawn-breasted Thrush** ♦ *Zoothera machiki* Endemic. Many on Yamdena, with several, lingering on the forest tracks.

**Orange-sided Thrush** ♦ (O-banded T) *Geokichla peronii* Seen well Wetar, Damar, & Babar (*audacis*); 20+ logged.

**Slaty-backed Thrush** ♦ *Geokichla schistacea* Endemic. Several on Yamdena; somewhat sneakier than usual.

**Timor Blue Flycatcher** ♦ (T Warbling-f) *Eumyias hyacinthinus* Small numbers on Wetar (*kuehni*).

**Sulawesi Blue Flycatcher** ♦ (Tanahjampea B F) *Cyornis [omissus] djampeanus* Endemic. Two brilliant males.

**Kalao Blue Flycatcher** ♦ *Cyornis kalaoensis* Endemic. At least five showed really well.

**Lesser Shortwing** *Brachypteryx leucophris* Heard-only. Several on Alor (nominate).

**Little Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula westermanni* Recorded on Alor (*hasselti*) and Wetar (*mayri*).

**Tanimbar Flycatcher** ♦ *Ficedula riedeli* Endemic. A single smart male on Yamdena.

**Damar Flycatcher** ♦ *Ficedula henrici* Endemic. Two lovely males and three others heard. Bird of the trip!

**Pied Bush Chat** *Saxicola caprata* Seen Pantar and Alor (*fruticola*), Wetar (*pyrrhonotus*), and Babar (*cognatus*).

**Thick-billed Flowerpecker** ◊ (Tenggara F) *Dicaeum [agile] obsoletum* Six on Wetar.

**Black-fronted Flowerpecker** ◊ *Dicaeum igniferum* Seen on Flores, Pantar, and Alor. Monotypic.

**Blue-cheeked Flowerpecker** ◊ (Red-chested F) *Dicaeum mauei* Seen on Tanahjampea (*splendidum*), Wetar and Damar (nominate), and Babar (*salvadorii*).

**Mistletoebird** ◊ (Salvadori's F) *Dicaeum [hirundinaceum] keiense* Endemic. Frequently seen on Yamdena.

**Olive-backed Sunbird** ◊ (Ornate S) *Cinnyris [jugularis] ornatus* A handful around the hotel near Labuan Bajo.

**Olive-backed Sunbird** ◊ (Flores Sea S) *Cinnyris [jugularis] teysmanni* Common Tanahjampea, Kalao, & Kalaotoa.

**Flame-breasted Sunbird** ◊ *Cinnyris solaris* Good numbers Flores, Pantar & Alor (nominate); and Wetar (*exquisitus*).

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

**Sunda Zebra Finch** ◊ *Taeniopygia guttata* Ten on Wetar.

**Scaly-breasted Munia** *Lonchura punctulata* Flores, Pantar, Alor, Wetar & Yamdena (*blasii*). One on ship Wetar-Leti.

**Black-faced Munia** ◊ *Lonchura molucca* Tanahjampea, Kalao, & Kalaotoa (nominate); Flores & Damar (*propinqua*).

**Five-colored Munia** ◊ *Lonchura quincolor* Small numbers on Yamdena.

**Tricolored Parrotfinch** ◊ *Erythrura tricolor* Two on Wetar, and at least ten on Babar.

**Eastern Yellow Wagtail (Alaskan W)** *Motacilla [tschutschensis] tschutschensis* A few Damar, Babar & Yamdena.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* Just one on Wetar.

## MAMMALS

**Common Spotted Cuscus (introduced?)** *Spilocuscus maculatus* Two scoped distantly in treetops on Kalao.

**Blue Whale** *Balaenoptera musculus* At least 28 seen Pantar-Alor-Wetar-Leti; with some fantastic views.

**Sperm Whale** *Physeter macrocephalus* Singles Alor-Wetar, and Wetar-Leti.

**Short-finned Pilot Whale** *Globicephala macrorhynchus* A pod of c.30 south-east of Kalaotoa.

**Pantropical Spotted Dolphin** *Stenella attenuata* A number were identified from Wetar to Leti.



**Spinner Dolphin *Stenella longirostris*** The commonest and most widespread cetacean.

**Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops aduncus*** Observed on several occasions, at least 60-70 individuals.

**Black-bearded Flying Fox *Pteropus melanopogon*** Frequently seen on Yamdena.

**Flying fox *Pteropus* (or similar) sp.** Small numbers noted on Leti and Babar.

**Long-tailed Macaque (introduced) *Macaca fascicularis*** Several on Tanahjampea and Kalao.

**Brown Rat (introduced) *Rattus norvegicus*** One on Leti.

## REPTILES

**Sea Turtle *Chelonia/Eretmochelys* sp.** One off Alor.

**Emerald Tree Skink *Lamprolepis smaragdina*** Several seen on Wetar.

**Timor Gliding-lizard (B Flying Dragon) *Draco timoriensis*** Several on Wetar.

**Tokay Gecko *Gekko gekko***

**Monitor *Varanus* sp.** One on Kalaotoa.

## BUTTERFLIES

**Haliphron Birdwing *Troides haliphron*** Kalaotoa.

**'Wetar' Orange Tip *Ixias kuehni*** Seen on Wetar. Endemic.

**'Reinwardt's' Orange Tip *Ixias reinwardtii*** Near Labuan Bajo.

**Chocolate Albatross *Appias lycida*** Tanahjampea.

**Caper White *Belenois java*** Near Labuan Bajo.

**Orange Gull *Cepora judith*** Kisol.

**Caper Gull *Cepora perimale*** Alor.

**Gull *Cepora temina*** Near Labuan Bajo.

**Psyche *Leptosia nina*** Wetar at least.

**Straight Pierrot *Caleta roxus*** One on Damar.

**Common Hedge Blue *Acytolepis puspa*** Damar.

**Large Green-banded Blue *Danis danis*** One on Yamdena.

**Gram Blue *Euchrysops cnejus*** Yamdena.

**Orange-tipped Pea Blue *Everes lacturnus*** One on Damar.

**Sunda Caerulean *Jamides aratus*** One at the hotel near Labuan Bajo.

**Pea Blue (Long-tailed B) *Lampides boeticus***

**Rounded Sixline Blue *Nacaduba berenice*** On the ship as we departed west Flores.

**Lesser Grass Blue *Zizina otis*** Seen on Wetar and Yamdena.

**Tawny Coster *Acraea terpsicore*** Near Labuan Bajo.

**Grey Glassy Tiger *Ideopsis juvena*** One on Kalao.

**Swamp Tiger *Danaus affinis*** Kalaotoa.

**Plain Tiger *Danaus chrysippus*** Pantar etc.

**Common Tiger (Striped T) *Danaus genutia*** Wetar etc.

**'Timor' Lacewing *Cethosia lamarcki*** Several on Wetar.

**Striped Blue Crow *Euploea mulciber*** Alor.

**Great Eggfly *Hypolimnna bolina*** One in the hotel garden near Labuan Bajo.

**'Tanimbar Sailer' *Neptis gracilis*** Heidi spotted one on Yamdena – the first live specimen ever photographed.

## DRAGONFLIES

**Slender Skimmer *Orthetrum sabina***

**Scarlet Skimmer *Crocothemis servilia*** At the hotel near Labuan Bajo.

**Indigo Dropwing *Trithemis festiva*** Alor.

**Swampwatcher *Potamarcha congener*** Near Labuan Bajo.

**Grenadier *Agrionoptera insignis*** Kalaotoa and Yamdena at least.

## FISH

**Ovalspot Butterflyfish *Chaetodon speculatus***

**Redfin Butterflyfish *Chaetodon lunulatus***

**Spot-tail Butterflyfish *Chaetodon ocellicaudus***

**Vagabond Butterflyfish *Chaetodon vagabundus***

**Black-and-white (Burgess's) Butterflyfish** *Chaetodon burgessi*

**Saddled Butterflyfish** *Chaetodon epphipium*

**Indo-Pacific Bluetang (Palette Surgeonfish)** *Paracanthurus hepatus*

**Moorish Idol** *Zanclus cornutus*

**Black Anemonefish** *Amphiprion melanopus*

**False Clown Anemonefish** *Amphiprion ocellaris*

**Convict Surgeonfish** *Acanthurus triostegus*

**Blue-lined Surgeonfish** *Acanthurus lineatus*

**Neon Damsel** *Pomacentrus coelestis*

## **PLANTS**

**Elephant-foot Yam** *Amorphophallus paeoniifolius* Several noted on Tanahjampea.