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Lesser Sundas, Indonesia

25th July - 12th August 2010

Leader: James Eaton

To the east of the tropical island paradise of Bali lie the Lesser Sundas, the most varied island group along the 5000km Indonesian chain. We will concentrate on just four of the islands which, although relatively small, show an amazing degree of endemism. During the tour we hope to see at least 60 species endemic to these islands including some of Indonesia's rarest and least known species. Starting on the dry, arid island of Sumba, we will concentrate on remaining patches of monsoon forest searching for the rare Sumba Hornbill, Sumba Myzomela and the spectacular Red-naped Fruit Dove. A short flight brings us to Timor, where a remarkably varied endemic avifauna awaits us as we bird from coastal grazing fields to montane forest in search of mouth-watering specialties such as Timor Sparrow, Black-banded Flycatcher and Orange-banded Thrush. The elongated island of Flores, dotted by rumbling volcanoes, is an impressive site and boasts an array of little-known endemics, including the recently rediscovered Flores Scops Owl, Flores Monarch and White-rumped Kingfisher. The tour finishes off with an exhilarating visit to the idyllic Komodo Island, home to the infamous Komodo Dragons and, most importantly, Yellow-crested Cockatoos.

Day 1:

Arrival into Denpasar International Airport, situated in the south-east corner of the beautiful island of Bali in preparation for our onward journey to the Lesser Sundas. Night in Kuta, Bali.

Day 2:

We take a morning flight to Waingapu on Sumba before driving to our base in the small, charming village of Lewa. After unpacking our bags at our friendly, comfortable homestay we shall begin birding in the nearby forest at Langgiluru National Park. Our first Sumba endemics will soon appear; Apricot-breasted Sunbird, Sumba Jungle Flycatcher and with luck, some of the widespread Lesser Sunda endemics such as Cinnamon-banded Kingfisher and Mees's Nightjar as dusk approaches. Waiting in the fading light we hope to hear and track down the distinctive calls of Sumba's two endemic Ninox owls, the gorgeous Sumba Boobook and the recently described Little Sumba Boobook. Night in Lewa.

Days 3-4:

Two days will be spent in the forest patches to the east and west of Lewa. Birding along the quiet road through forest patches in search of Sumba's rare endemics, including the endangered Sumba Hornbill, Sumba Green Pigeon, spectacular Red-naped Fruit Dove, Sumba Myzomela and the 3 endemic flycatchers; Sumba, Sumba Brown and Sumba Jungle Flycatchers. Other species that inhabit these bird-rich forests include a variety of spectacular parrots including Marigold's Lorikeet, Red-cheeked, Great-billed and Electus Parrots and, with luck, the endemic race of the critically endangered Yellow-crested Cockatoo. Chestnut-backed Thrush, Elegant Pitta, Green Junglefowl and Orange-footed Scrubfowl are just a few of the species lurking in the undergrowth. Nights in Lewa.

Day 5:

The morning will be spent birding in the nearby forest of Lewa. After another filling lunch with our charming

hosts we shall head back to Waingapu in time for some late afternoon birding in the nearby grasslands of Yumbu where we search in particular for Sumba's only non-forest endemic, the Sumba Buttonquail. Night in Waingapu.

Day 6:

An early morning birding in the grasslands of Yumbu in search of the elusive Sumba Buttonquail. Searching for this bird can be a frustrating experience as we hope for more than just a fleeting glimpse. Other species occurring in the grasslands include Brown Quail, White-shouldered Triller, Broad-billed Flycatcher, Indonesian Honeyeater, Zebra Finch and Five-coloured Munia.

We then take the short flight to Kupang, situated on the west coast of Timor. The avifauna of this island is noticeably Australasian in this markedly dry landscape. We can hope for migrant Australasian Pratincoles hawking over the runway before transferring to our hotel. Night in Kupang.

Day 7:

Camplong holds one of the few remaining pockets of lowland forest in West Timor and fortunately many of the endemics can still be found here. Orange-banded Thrush, Fawn-breasted Whistler, Timor Stubtail and Buff-banded Bushbird, Spot-breasted Dark-eye, Timor Blue Flycatcher, Timor Oriole and Timor Friarbird all occur here, and with luck we can hope to see the elusive Black-banded Flycatcher in the bamboo thickets. In the evening we shall listen for Timor Boobook, a split from the Southern Boobook complex. Night in Kupang.

Day 8:

The early morning will be spent birding at Camplong for any remaining species we have yet to see. After a late breakfast we'll head further inland and up the steep road to Gunung Mutis, with its sub-montane terrain and species.

We will have time to explore the lower reaches of the mountain, around our basic homestay in the small village of Fatumnasi. Tricoloured Parrotfinch, Helmeted Friarbird, Island Thrush and Olive-headed Lorikeet are all possible here. Night in Fatumnasi.

Day 9:

All day will be spent on the upper reaches of Gunung Mutis in search of the endemic Timor Imperial Pigeon, a difficult and rare endemic restricted to montane regions. Island Thrush, Metallic Pigeon, Timor Leaf Warbler, Streak-breasted and Yellow-eared Honeyeaters are all common, while rarer species include Olive-shouldered Parrot, Iris Lorikeet and Chestnut-backed Thrush. We will pay particular attention to the *timorensis* Pygmy Wren Babbler, with its markedly different song, a potential future split. Night in Fatumnasi.

Day 10:

A final search of the lower slopes of Gunung Mutis will allow us another opportunity to search for the nomadic Tricoloured Parrotfinch, Wallacean Cuckooshrike and endemic parrots. In the afternoon we will head down the mountain birding en-route as we head back to Kupang. Night in Kupang.

Day 11:

An early morning start will see us at the small coastal forest patch at Bipolo. Though small, this forest patch still holds a remarkable number of birds. We will search for several species of pigeon, including Pink-headed Imperial Pigeon, Black-backed and Rose-crowned Fruit Doves. The forest is also home to Cinnamon-banded Kingfisher, Orange-banded Thrush, Timor Figbird, Olive-shouldered Parrot and Timor Friarbird.

The nearby shrimp ponds can hold Royal Spoonbill, Red-capped Plover and Sunda Teal, while the fields leading up to the ponds hold large numbers of munias, including small numbers of Five-coloured and Pale-headed along with the rare Timor Sparrow, migrant Black-faced Cuckooshrike and Black-faced Woodswallow. Night in Kupang.

Day 12:

The short flight from Kupang to Ruteng, in the highlands of Western Flores, will hopefully arrive early enough to allow us some late afternoon birding at nearby Lake Ranamese. Birding along the road will introduce us to some of the more common Flores endemics, and perhaps the first of the trickier species. Possibilities include Flores Jungle Flycatcher, Flores Leaf Warbler, Russet-capped Tesia and both Crested and Yellow-browed Dark-eyes.

Night-birding around Ruteng could reveal Wallace's and Flores Scops Owls. The vocalisations of the latter were unknown until Birdtour Asia refound the species here in 2005. Night in Ruteng

Day 13:

Following some mornings birding at Lake Ranamese, we head south during the heat of the day to Kisol, a

coastal village that still has some easily accessible intact lowland forest. The afternoon will be spent searching for the lowland endemics such as White-rumped Kingfisher, Flores Crow, Thick-billed Dark-eye, Black-fronted Flowerpecker, Flores Hawk Eagle and Flores Lorikeet along with a host of other scarce species. With luck we might find Chestnut-capped Thrush, a species being driven to extinction on the island by capture bird-trade.

Once again night-birding can be exciting, with Wallace's and Moluccan Scops Owls and Mees's Nightjar possible. Night in Kisol.

Day 14:

We have the whole day to explore the forest at Kisol in search of the previously mentioned species.

Day 15:

Depending on our success the previous day we shall either spend the morning birding at Kisol or depart early for Ruteng once again. In the afternoon we will visit Poko Ranaka or Lake Ranamese in search of the montane endemics once more. Night in Ruteng.

Day 16:

The itinerary today will be flexible depending on our previous successes but en-route to the picturesque coastal town of Labuanbajo we shall make at least one stop for the enigmatic Flores Monarch, a species restricted to sub-montane forest in West Flores. Night in Labuanbajo.

Day 17:

Today we take a speedboat to Komodo Island, home of the legendary Komodo Dragons. Obviously this beast, which can reach over 3m in length, is high on the agenda, as is Yellow-crested Cockatoo, a critically endangered species at one of its last remaining strongholds. Birds are noticeably confiding on the island, especially the Orange-footed Scrubfowl and Green Junglefowl. Other species include Yellow-bellied White-eye, Indonesian Collared Dove (split from Indonesian), Great-billed Heron, Black-naped Tern and Beach Thick Knee. Night in Labuanbajo.

Day 18:

Our final morning will be spent birding the degraded forest along the road to Potawangka village in search of the nomadic Wallace's Hanging Parrot. A variety of other species favour the fruiting trees in this area, including Golden-rumped Flowerpecker, Great-billed & Red-cheeked Parrots and Elegant Pitta.

Our flight from Labuanbajo back to Bali is expected to depart at lunchtime, allowing us to arrive back in time to relax in the comfortable surroundings of our hotel. Birds in this area include Olive-backed Tailorbird and White-headed Munia. Night in Kuta, Bali.

Day 19:

International departures from Denpasar International Airport.

Please note this itinerary is open to change at any time due to frequent changes in internal flight schedules and a degree of flexibility is required.

Total tour cost:	£ 3440	\$ 5060
Single room supplement:	£ 245	\$ 365
Deposit:	£ 300	\$ 600

Maximum Group Size: 7

The cost includes: All accommodation, all main meals, overland transport, internal flights, permits, entrance fees & guide fees.

The cost excludes: International flights, departure taxes, insurance, alcoholic drinks & other items of a personal nature

For further information please contact us via [e-mail](#) or **+44 1332 516254**