Our second Sulawesi tour of the year was immensely successful with almost all targets and specialties seen well and a few surprises thrown in too! The list of highlight species is typically mouthwatering, topped as always by the amazing Wallace’s Standardwing, but with a fine supporting cast of Ivory-breasted Pitta, Geomalia, Sulawesi Thrush, Purple-bearded Bee-eater, all endemic kingfishers including the stunning Sulawesi Dwarf Kingfisher and two sightings of the rarely-seen Scaly Kingfisher, Great Shortwing and that truly mega megapode the Maleo. Night-birds were a particular feature of the tour with an incredible 15 species recorded including all possible endemics, ranging from the bizarre, hairy-faced Moluccan Owlet Nightjar, to the truly ‘satanic’ encounters with Diabolical Nightjars and a suite of amazing endemic owls including day-roosting Ochre-bellied Boobooks, Cinnabar Boobook, our first ever sighting of Barking Owl on this tour and a thrilling encounter with the rarely-seen and little known Minahassa Masked Owl.
On Sulawesi the lowlands got us off to a great start with Maleo showing early in the tour much to everyone’s relief and allowed us plenty of time to clean up the other lowland specialties, in particularly Maroon-chinned Fruit Dove, Pied Cuckooshrike, Yellow-breasted Racquet-tail, Red-backed Thrush, the difficult Small Sulawesi Hanging Parrot, Lilac-cheeked Kingfisher and Sulawesi Dwarf Kingfisher. Moving to the highlands our fortune continued beginning with Cinnabar Boobook, Scaly Kingfisher and Matinan Flycatcher at Gunung Ambang and continuing at Lore Lindu where we found Sulawesi Ground Dove, Sulawesi Thrush, Great Shortwing, Purple-bearded Bee-eater, Minahassa Masked Owl and an extremely obliging Geomalia. Halmahera was equally thrilling with Wallace’s Standardwings spectacular as ever, Ivory-breasted Pitta, Sombre Kingfisher, Moluccan Owlet Nightjar, a well deserved Moluccan Scrubfowl, Sombre Kingfisher, Moluccan King Parrot and the rare Purple Dollarbird for our third tour in succession.

Some of the group having arrived the previous day set out from Manado early to enjoy lunch overlooking a productive area of rice fields and finding some nice water-birds and other widespread species before continuing to Kotamabagu where we met with the rest of the newly arrived group in the evening.

The next morning we departed in the very early hours up into the mountains to Gunung Ambang. Arriving well before dawn we quickly found one of the famous birds of the area, a smart Cinnabar Boobook staring down at us from the canopy. This owl was discovered as new to science as recently as 1999 but the recent discovery of its distinctive vocalizations has shown it to be widespread in its montane range, and indeed we heard at least another 5 birds prior to dawn. Further up the mountain as we enjoyed a pre-dawn picnic breakfast a pair of Scaly Kingfishers began to call nearby and we moved into position. Unfortunately as dawn broke they became quiet again but further along the trail we manage to tempt in the female bird from a steep gully which perched at very close range for most of the group.

While viewing the kingfisher we also picked out the distinctive call of a Spot-tailed Goshawk which after only a short time flew in to investigate our playback, perching close by and allowing careful studies of all salient features including the distinct white spots on the upper-tail.

As we continued along the trail the biggest prize of the mountain soon perform, a pair of Matinan Flycatchers giving good close views, allowing studies of its subtle characteristics including a distinctly hooked bill and bristly face. This rare flycatcher is known only from the northern Minahassa peninsula of Sulawesi and this is currently the only known accessible site to find them. In the same area a group of Malia showed well and a Red-eared Fruit Dove was rather awkward to see in the canopy. Of course many other new species liven up our first morning including confiding Snowy-browed Flycatcher, Rusty-bellied Fantail, Yellow-vented Whistler, Fiery-browed Myna, Sulawesi Pygmy Woodpecker, Sulawesi Babbler, Mountain Tailorbird, Sulawesi Leaf Warbler and a Chestnut-backed Bush Warbler at close range skulking on the forest floor.

An immature Sulawesi Hawk Eagle, several Chinese Goshawks and our only Black Kites of the tour were seen at the forest edge.

After lunch we spent the afternoon birding along a quiet road flanked by forest. The birds were rather subdued but we did add Ivory-backed Woodswallow, White-necked Myna, fantastic views of Knobbed Hornbill and Purple-winged Roller, Bogani Nani Wartabone.
Hornbill, and some of the group saw Black-billed Koel. During a stop at a roadside marsh we found Black-backed Swamphen, good numbers of Wandering Whistling Duck, a flyover male Spotted Harrier and our only Black-crowned Night Herons of the tour.

We had no luck finding Speckled Boobook around our accommodations just after dusk but did add a nice flyby Sulawesi Masked Owl which gave good view in our powerful spotlight as it flew out into the nearby fields to hunt.

The next morning was a much-anticipated visit to the breeding grounds of the Maleo, one of Sulawesi’s most spectacular endemics. Maleo visit traditional, communal breeding grounds where they incubate their eggs in the geothermal soils. Unfortunately they are very susceptible to human predation of their large eggs but we were glad to find that the extensive conservation efforts at this particular site have begun to reverse this effect.

First bird of the day was a spectacular view of a Sulawesi Masked Owl which flew in front of our vehicles before posing at super close range by the roadside. Arriving at the appointed forest clearing before dawn we taped in a Sulawesi Nightjar for close flight views and later the much larger Great Eared Nightjars hawked overhead.

As we waited patiently in the clearing adjacent to the breeding grounds there was no sign of Maleo presence but many other birds showed including wacky Sulawesi Crested Myna’s and best of all a Maroon-chinned Fruit Dove which gave great views – a great relief as this declining lowland endemic can be tricky to find. With the time passing and no Maleo giving themselves up we set off into the forest to see if we might get lucky. Almost immediately we hit an interesting feeding flock with Yellow-billed Malkoha, several Ashy Woodpeckers and Bay Coucals all appearing. Just as we neared the end of our walk, with the heat rising and hopes fading the we could find a Maleo, suddenly there was the distinctive braying call of a Maleo up the slope above us and a female responding from nearby. The undergrowth seemed impenetrable but the experienced rangers set off in pursuit and 5 minutes later we were scrambling up the steep slope to find a Maleo perched in the mid-canopy having little success hiding its huge pink and black body! A pair of Pale-blue Monarch showed (split from Black-naped) then a short stop along a nearby road produced the hoped-for Purple-winged Roller, Barred Rail and a distant immature Sulawesi Serpent Eagle. Sulawesi Honey Buzzard was added en route and upon arriving back at our accommodation at lunch time we were greeted by another scarce endemic, a group of Pied Cuckoo-shrikes in the trees right by our accommodation!

During a midday siesta some continued birding finding Gould’s Bronze Cuckoo, Spotted Kestrel and Peregrine Falcon, while Rob was fortunate to locate a day-roosting Speckled Boobook for all to enjoy. In the mid-afternoon we made our way by bamboo raft across the river and into the degraded forest patch opposite. The birding was very lively and after some chasing, we finally found Yellow-breasted Racquet-tail perched nicely in a bare tree and nearby a flowering tree offered large numbers of Ornate Lorikeets while Blue-backed Parrots perched close by. In fruiting trees we found our first Grey-cheeked Green Pigeons, and a single White-bellied Imperial Pigeon.
Post-dinner owling was a little frustrating as we eventually got a vocal response from a Sulawesi Scops Owl and tracked in down to very close range only to find it completely obscured and never got a glimpse. Ochre-bellied Boobooks were also heard only but a Speckled Boobook did show nicely. The next morning began with more owling and this time success as we finally located the cute Sulawesi Scops Owl perched close to the accommodation. Our few hours of birding in the forest over the river found our first Black-billed Koel, and more excellent views of Yellow-breasted Racquet-tail, Blue-backed Parrot and Pied Cuckooshrike before it was time to pack up for the drive north-east to Tangkoko. Our lunch stop overlooking an area of rice fields held several surprise Java Sparrows (sadly presumably introduced here), Long-toed Stint among the commoner waders and a White-browed Crake. We arrived at the approach road to Tangkoko in time for late afternoon birding and we added an obliging Sulawesi Black Pigeon and a comical group of toucan-like Sulawesi Dwarf Hornbills. Unfortunately a group of calling Isabelline Bush-hens remained hidden in the thick understory but a Barred Rail was seen.

The next morning we headed out on foot at dawn to explore the adjacent Tangkoko National Park. In the more open grassland areas one of the first birds we found was a smart Sulawesi Goshawk sunning itself on a dead snag. Here we also saw two more Sulawesi Back Pigeons and added White-rumped Cuckooshrike and several Silver-tipped Imperial Pigeons. Several Isabelline Bush-hens were calling but the best we could manage were brief flight views. Making our way into the forest we soon flushed two birds from the understory which were relocated and proved to be stunning Red-backed Thrushes. While watching the thrushes a Lilac-cheeked Kingfisher called from nearby and was soon located for close and prolonged views as it sat unconcerned by our presence. Amazingly just meters away we then found another of our target endemic kingfishers with an equally confiding Green-backed Kingfisher perched at close range just above the ground. What a start! Moving deeper into the forest we added two more Green-backed Kingfishers, another Lilac-cheeked Kingfisher and were pleased to find that the Ochre-bellied Boobooks were still in residence and we enjoyed excellent daytime views of a pair of these attractive birds. Our next target took a little more locating but once found the pair of Sulawesi Dwarf Kingfishers performed impeccably, perching at very close range and allowing every colourful feature of this gorgeous bird to be seen.

In the afternoon we set out again flushing a covey of Blue-breasted Quail at close range in the grasslands while in the forest good views were had of Purple-winged Roller and more Ashy Woodpeckers. In the late afternoon we waited at the sleeping tree of one the world’s most endearing mammals, the endemic Spectral Tarsier. We didn’t have to wait long for them to appear and great views were had of these tiny creatures bouncing around from branch to branch in search of insects, not surprisingly always a tour highlight!

The next morning we again started in the grasslands and this time were successful with excellent and prolonged views of several Isabelline Bush-hens as they ventured out onto the grassy track to feed, often alongside Buff-barred Rail and Barred Rail. The open areas also gave unusually good perched views of Golden-mantled Racquet-tails in a fruiting tree; while a calling Gray’s Grasshopper Warbler was tease closer but was typically skulking, giving only brief glimpses.
In the forest we headed for a known Red-bellied Pitta territory where it wasn’t long before a bird gave its deep, throaty response. Shortly after we had our first views of the bird, and as we followed deeper into the forest a second bird also appeared with our views getting gradually better and better before culminating in quite amazing views of the male bird, perched from every angle, at close range, with his whole body shaking as he belted out a territorial song – a star performance which beat many spectacular endemics to second place as ‘bird of the trip’.

Next we checked more Red-backed Thrush territories eventually finding another obliging pair which gave very close views, then during the walk back to the lodge a Stephan’s Dove shot across the track and into the forest. We set off in pursuit, initially getting brief views before it flushed up into a nearby tree and gave great views.

The regular Ruddy Kingfishers were on the river opposite the lodge during the midday.

**Sulawesi Black Pigeon and Ochre-bellied Boobook, Tangkoko ©Rob Hutchinson**

**Sulawesi Dwarf Kingfisher and Lilac-cheeked Kingfisher, Tangkoko ©Rob Hutchinson**

In the afternoon we took boats out along the picturesque coastline to the north but found the regular cave roost of a pair of Sulawesi Masked Owls strangely empty. Offshore an impressive Great-billed Heron was roosting on the fishing traps, several Black-naped Terns were feeding there and a flock of Lesser...
Frigatebirds contained a single Great Frigatebird. By paddling slowly along a nearby mangrove river we had nice views of at least two huge Great-billed Kingfishers. Also of interest were distant perched views of Channel-billed Cuckoo, a flock of Pied Imperial Pigeons, and on the shoreline we found Lesser Sand Plover and a single Grey-tailed Tattler.

The next morning we spent the first few hours birding along the road above Tangkoko and despite the windy condition manage to get convincing views of a single tiny, Small Sulawesi Hanging Parrot in a flowering tree full of their larger relatives. Better views of Black-billed Koel were had and two White-throated Needletails passing through south to their wintering grounds in Australia.

Then it was time to make our way onwards to Manado airport for our short flight across Weber’s Line to Ternate. Our flight was thankfully on schedule and we were soon landed on this volcanic island before being whisked by speedboat across the open water to the small town of Sidangoli on the west coast of Halmahera, adding only Greater Crested Tern of note. Then as we approached Sidangoli a pair of Beach Kingfishers perched in plain view on the edge of the mangroves.

Keen to begin our birding in this new avifaunal region we drove north from Sidangoli to Lame in the afternoon. En route we made several stops; firstly for an amazing Moustached Treeswift perched at eye-level, then impressive Gurney’s Eagles soaring overhead, and finally an obliging pair of Blue-and-white Kingfishers on roadside wires.

At Lame we walked slowly along the short stretch of forest road before finally in flew our target Sombre Kingfisher, a striking forest kingfisher with a rather unduly derogatory name! The area also produced our first Eclectus Parrots, Great-billed Parrot, White Cockatoo, Moluccan Imperial Pigeon, Goliath Coucal and Blyth’s Hornbill.

We departed very early next morning for our eagerly anticipated visit to a lekking ground of the Wallace’s Standardwing, a spectacular bird-of-paradise endemic to Halmahera and a very few surrounding small islands. First bird of the day was a Dusky Scrubfowl located roosting above the forest trail before we continued on the hot and sweaty walk into the rainforest. Another stop produced a fierce Moluccan Scops Owl staring down for an intruder.

We arrived before dawn at the lek site and waited patiently until as the sky began to lighten a chorus of harsh, rasping calls heralded the appearance of the Standardwings and in ever improving light we enjoyed great views of a male in a nearby tree as he periodically performed with green breast shields erect and the white ‘standards’ waved aloft. The appearance of a female caused great excitement with a cacophony of calling from the males. The performance was truly amazing and we all agreed that the spectacle was well worth the hot and sweaty trek through the rainforest. After a celebratory picnic breakfast we had brief views of Scarlet-breasted Fruit Doves before making our way slowing back down the trail. Noisy Common Paradise Kingfishers also eventually showed to all after giving us the runaround, then White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Rufous-bellied Triller, Golden Whistler were added during the walk back.

After lunch we drove northwards along the east coast of Halmahera’s upper arm to the town of Tobelo seeing several more roadside Blue-and-white Kingfishers during the journey. After dinner we set off north again on another adventure in search of Moluccan Scrubfowl. After an entertaining journey in dug-out
canoes we arrived at the volcanic sand beaches where these megapodes come to incubate their eggs. Unfortunately the scrubfowls were not overly cooperative tonight and a long wait and much searching produced only two distant and poor flight views. Some gave up the search at this point but those who waited into the early hours were rewarded when one bird was finally located and gave point blank views. After a relatively late breakfast the next morning (it was actually daylight!) we drove south to the small fishing village of Daru where all our food and drink provisions for our stay at Foli were loaded onto a speedboat and we set off for the short trip across the bay.

In the afternoon we explored the disused logging track above Foli village by foot and soon start adding new species. Grey-headed Fruit Dove, Violet-necked Lory, Moluccan Hanging Parrot, Dusky-Brown Oriole, Drab Whistler, Cream-throated White-eye, Paradise Crow (a rather less spectacular bird of paradise than the Standardwing!) and fantastic views of an obliging White-naped Monarch. The highlight of the afternoon was a fantastic Barking Owl, flushed from the track in front of us in broad daylight where we later found it had been feeding on a recently deceased (murdered?) Halmahera Boobook! The Barking Owl proceeded to give great views and was a welcome write-in for this tour.
In the late afternoon Ivory-breasted Pitta’s became vocal but although we tried hard, creeping down into the forest we obtained only flight views. Two Common Paradise Kingfishers gave some compensation.

The next day was again spent along the logging track and after a frustrating encounter with a Halmahera Boobook, heard but not seen, the daytime birds behaved better. New additions were Chattering Lory, Blue-capped Fruit Dove, Grey-throated Goshawk, Moluccan Cuckoo-shrike, Halmahera Cuckoo-shrike, Slaty Flycatcher, Moluccan Starling, White-streaked Friarbird, Dusky Honeyeater and the scarce Halmahera Flowerpecker. A wintering Himalayan Cuckoo was also interesting but our patient wait didn’t produce a sniff of Purple Dollarbird.

In the afternoon we visited a regular pitta spot and found amazingly good bird activity sparked by the midday rains. Almost immediately a chorus of Ivory-breasted Pittas began to call and in no time at all one of them was tempted into the open, giving a stunning view as it circled around us onto the path. This bird certainly lived up to expectations and the scientific name *maxima* is very appropriate!

At dusk the weird cries of Moluccan Owlet Nightjars emanated from the nearby forest and a short while later one of these wacky, hairy-faced critters was posing in the spotlight, a brilliant mixture of nightjar, owl and frogmouth in one bird! It perched for a long time before finally deciding to head off and leaving us elated. All was not finished however as a little further along the track a very distant Halmahera Boobook could be heard and it didn’t take much persuasion before he was sitting silently close by. This bird was equally cooperative as it showed on several perches, giving front and back views and calling strongly.

The next day again gave good views of many of the previous species but new birds included a close fly-past from a Great Cuckoo Dove, Slaty Flycatcher, Superb Fruit Dove, Oriental Hobby and much improved views of Blue-capped Fruit Dove and two more White-naped Monarchs. Ivory-breasted Pitta was again seen while Common Cicadabird was finally added.

A single Moluccan King Parrot showed well and we logged excellent numbers of Chattering Lories, pleasing to see as this species has been almost extirpated from other parts of the island by bird trappers.

The next morning everything fell into place with Scarlet-breasted Fruit Dove seen in two localities and the Purple Dollarbird stakeout finally proving its worth with perched and flight views of a pair of these rarities. Also logged were an impressive 25 White-throated Needletails passing overhead, Dusky Honeyeater and Drab Whistler were both seen again and another Ivory-breasted pitta completed a good showing for this prime specialty.

In the afternoon, when the boat finally arrived, we made our way back across the bay to Daru seeing Bulwer’s Petrel and Pomarine Skua en route.

A change to our flight schedules gave us an extra morning around Sidangoli which we spent at a nice viewpoint overlooking a forest valley above town although sadly the only accipiter we saw was the commoner Grey-throated Goshawk. Back at Sidangoli we made our way into a grassy field where Rufous-tailed Bush-hens had been calling overnight and after some searching (some of it on hands and knees!) we all had views of one of these skulkers. The boat crossing back to Ternate added Bridled Tern for the trip and a huge pod of dolphins.
Our flight from Ternate to Makassar was again on time so we had time in the late afternoon for an exploration of the fishponds on the outskirts of Makassar. With high tide approaching we noted a great array of shorebirds including Javan Plover, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Far Eastern Curlew, Bar and Black-tailed Godwits, Ruddy Turnstone and something of a Sulawesi rarity in the form of two Eastern Curlew. A flock of at least 30 Sunda Teal, a brief Slaty-breasted Rail, and two Gull-billed Terns also added variety. The following morning we headed to the limestone karst forest of Karaenta noting several Savanna Nightjars hawking at dawn. Our main target here was the localized Black-ringed White-eye which was one of the first birds we saw in the morning. Exploring the forest along the busy road we found further treats including a perched Sulawesi Goshawk, a surprisingly low-altitude Grey-headed Imperial Pigeon, many Golden-mantled Racquet-tails, Blue-backed Parrot, White-necked Myna and great views of a party of Sulawesi Dwarf Hornbill, noting that this race sanfordi shows black bars at the bill base.
The nearby agricultural fields held our first White-shouldered Triller, Pied Bushchat, Blue-tailed Bee-eater two Sulawesi Serpent Eagles and a Sulawesi Honey Buzzard soaring over the forest edge. Our early afternoon flight left on time and we upon arrival in Palu we set out immediately towards Lore Lindu National Park. Making good time we had time for some late afternoon birding, stopping on the forest edge to see good numbers of White-bellied Imperial Pigeons and a brief Grey-headed Imperial Pigeon for some.

The next morning we began our serious birding in the park in the lower roadside forests where predawn found us watching an obliging pair of Cinnabar Boobook, and we noted with interest the striking plumage differences of what must surely be a different subspecies to the one seen earlier in the tour at Gunung Ambang. Even more exciting were a couple of brief calls from a distant Minahassa Masked Owl but sadly we had no response with dawn approaching.
We then waited in eager anticipation as a chorus of birdsong heralded dawn. It didn't take long for bird activity to pick up despite the overcast conditions and we found Malia (of the chestnut-winged race stresemanni), Piping crow, confiding Blue-fronted Flycatchers and brief views of a skulking pair of Great Shortwings. A good mixed flock appeared containing Cerulean Cuckoo-shrikes and a smart Pygmy Cuckoo-shrike. Continuing along the road we found Sulawesi Myzomela then Streak-headed Dark-eyes were next to appear, a treat for the Zosteropidae connoisseurs. As we entered the forest trails it wasn't long before the first our targets appeared. A Sulawesi Thrush responded extremely well to playback of its song, the thrush-like quality of which contrasts with the rather babbler-like behaviour and appearance of this fascinating bird. Continuing along the trail we soon heard the distinctive call from one of these forests most elusive denizens, Maroon-backed Whistler. Very soon we had found it and got great views of this subtle bird.
We also found our first Lesser Sulawesi Honeyeater, a Blue-faced Parrotfinch with a mixed feeding flock and on the walk back a Scaly Kingfisher was found sitting exposed and close to the trail allowing most good views again before flying off into the forest.
With two of the mountains most elusive birds under the belt (the thrush and whistler are usually much more difficult than this!) on the first morning we made our first rough and bumpy ride up the famed Anaso track.
and after lunch walked down to enjoy nice views of our first Purple-bearded Bee-eater, characteristicly pumping their tails as they scanned from open snags. Lower still a check of a favoured roost spot gave fantastic views of a day-roosted Diabolical Nightjar which posed pleasingly for the photographers then finished with a dramatic threat display – wings raised and mouth open – to remind us who is the boss!

In the afternoon we again dropped down to the forest edge where we had found several imperial pigeons the previous day. Upon arrival the sweet song of a Sulawesi Blue Flycatcher caught our attention and we wasted no time pursuing, getting fine looks at a pair. In the late afternoon the pigeons again became active and amongst the numerous White-hooded Imperial Pigeons we had good flight views of at least five Grey-headed Imperial Pigeons, easily identified by their smaller size and lack of green breast band. Purple Needletails, Short-tailed Starlings and male Crimson Sunbird were other noticeable additions.

The following day we departed early to fit in some pre-dawn owling and this proved incredibly successful for having walking only a few hundred meters we heard the distinctive hissing screech of a Minahassa Masked Owl close by. The bird sounded like it was flying so on a hunch we walked quietly back and there it was sitting above the road on an open branch in the spotlight, the small size, rusty toned crown, neat flank spots, dark wings, and cute facial expression clearly confirming it as a Minahassa Masked Owl – one of only a very few confirmed field sightings and a new bird for all present, Rob included! Tally ho!

From here we headed again up the Anaso track. This track was formerly a logging road accessing the heart of the park but has been disused for many years now but still allows access to the higher reaches of the mountains where some of the parks biggest specialties lurk. The track is increasingly eroded and only the combination of our 4wd vehicles and experienced drivers allowed us to scale the road and even then, only as far as a broken bridge at the midway point. From here we hiked up the mountain, our aim to reach a spot that has been regular in recent years for the rare Geomalia. A long morning stake-out in the area did not unfortunately produce any Geomalia but we did add other high altitude specialties such as Greater Sulawesi Honeyeater, lethargic Yellow-flanked Whistlers (now thought to be more closely related to Waxwings than to whistlers!), Crimson-crowned Flowerpecker and Mountain Serin, albeit only flybys on this occasion for most. Displaying Sulawesi Hawk Eagle added excitement and we noted at least 10 Red-eared fruit Doves plus several Superb Fruit Doves.

In the afternoon we dropped down into the Sedoa valley, finding another pair of Sulawesi Blue Flycatchers, which passed our crude species-level test by ignoring sound recordings of Mangrove Blue Flycatcher from mainland south-east Asia and the Philippines (with which it is usually lumped) but flying in dramatically to their own song. We spent the late afternoon prior to dusk at the rice-fields in Wuasa village hoping for Australasian Grass Owl but finding only Pacific Black Duck and amazing views of Purple Needletails.

Another try for the Minahassa Masked Owl in the morning produced only a few very distant calls although three Cinnabar Boobooks again gave good views. After breakfast we spent the early morning birding along the lower sections of the Anaso track. Here we finally found Sulawesi Drongo which proved surprisingly scarce on this visit but things were otherwise quiet until a nice perched Sulawesi Myzomela was followed by another flyover Mountain Serin and nice perched views of Yellow-and-green Lorikeets.
As we headed down again we were amazed to hear the low booming call of a Sombre Pigeon from the nearby forest so we crept quietly to a good viewpoint and the bird soon responded by flying in and perching in clear view for all. It stuck around for quite some time, a great showing for this elusive pigeon. The forest trail was quiet except for some noisy but typically skulking Chestnut-backed Bush Warblers but a very confiding immature Blue-faced Parrotfinch was appreciated.

After lunch back in Wuasa where our first Black-shouldered Kite was noted, we spent the afternoon birding again at lower altitudes along the Sedoa Valley with Sulawesi Serpent Eagle and at least three Rufous-bellied Eagles seen.

In the evening we again visited a ricefield area near Wuasa this time seeing Black-backed Swamphen, Pacific Black Duck, Buff-banded Rail and Barred Rail.

The next morning we made another assault on the Anaso track, this time separating in the hope that covering more ground. This proved to be a good move when Stig-Uno brilliantly found a Geomalia feeding
on the lower stretches of the track and amazingly the bird stuck around for more than an hour, time enough for the others to be fetched and see this fascinating bird feeding thrush-like on the track.

On the way down we saw no less than 3 individual Diabolical Nightjars, one of which gave particularly close views, trusting completely in its amazing camouflage to evade detection.

We were quite amazed to say the least to discover that one of the muddy pools on the track contained several fresh footprints from a feeding rail! At this altitude and in this habitat, any rail was sure to be exciting so we made plans to return in the evening to see if it might appear again. This we did but unfortunately in spite of a vigil until dusk nothing appeared, although a mystery call was recorded. At dusk a pair of Diabolical Nightjars emerged and we were able to see them in action rather than just sitting at point-blank range!

Although nothing had appeared we were nevertheless determined to try and solve the mystery so by dawn the next morning we were back at the spot. Sadly nothing appeared in the puddle but we scored a big bonus when a Sulawesi Ground Dove erupted from the nearby vegetation, giving prolonged flight views as it crossed the large clearing before dropping again into the forest where it promptly disappeared despite a careful search.

At this point we decided to play the tape of the mystery call from the previous afternoon and amazingly had a response as an agitated bird called from the nearby reeds. We waited intently and could see the reeds moving but the vegetation was far too dense and the bird lost interest and retreated.

Now we were sure that the prints and call came from a Blue-faced Rail and a more thorough exploration of the swampy forest found no sign but plenty of fantastic habitat then more frustration as fresh prints appeared on the track while we were in the forest! Ahhh!

Those who ventured further along the track were again rewarded by the Geomalia giving good views feeding on the track and Mountain Serin, Cerulean Cuckooshrike and very nice views of Pygmy Cuckooshrike were again noted.

In the afternoon we made the long drive back towards Palu making a final birding stop on the outskirts at the Olobaju river. Here we found an amazing abundance of birds, the area teaming with bee-eaters, trillers, munias and others.

Among the commoner Black-faced and Black-headed Munias we found several striking Pale-headed Munia and had excellent views of White-shouldered Triller. Some bashing through the grasslands found several Savanna Nightjars which gave great views both perched and hawking around, Red-backed and Barred Buttonquail and Blue-breasted Quail.

Then it was time to head into Palu and finally enjoy the luxury of a fine hotel, with fine food and plenty of Bintang to celebrate an immensely successful tour.

Our total of 294 species recorded including three species heard only is one of the highest ever total for a three-week trip to the islands.

White-naped Monarch and Purple Dollarbird, Halmahera
©Rob Hutchinson  ©Tour participant Bjorn Anderson
Systematic List

PROCELLARIIDAE: Petrels and Shearwaters
Bulwer's Petrel  
*Bulweria bulwerii*

FRIGATIDAE: Frigatebirds
Great Frigatebird  
*Fregata minor*
Lesser Frigatebird  
*Fregata ariel*

SULIDAE: Gannets and Boobies
Brown Booby  
*Sula leucogaster*

ARDEIDAE: Herons
Great-billed Heron  
*Ardea sumatrana*
Purple Heron  
*Ardea purpurea*
Great Egret  
*Ardea alba modesta*
Intermediate Egret  
*Ardea intermedia*
Little Egret  
*Egretta garzetta*
Pacific Reef Egret  
*Egretta sacra*
Eastern Cattle Egret  
*Ardea coromandus*
Javan Pond Heron  
*Ardeola speciosa*
Striated Heron  
*Butorides striatus*
Black-crowned Night Heron  
*Nycticorax nycticorax*
Cinnamon Bittern  
*Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*

ACCIPITRIDAE: Hawks, Eagles and Allies
Pacific Baza  
*Aviceda subcristata rufa*
Sulawesi Honey Buzzard  
*Pernis celebensis*  
*S*
Black-winged Kite  
*Elanus caeruleus*
Black Kite  
*Milvus migrans*
Brahminy Kite  
*Haliastur indus*
White-bellied Sea Eagle  
*Haliaeetus leucogaster*
Sulawesi Serpent Eagle  
*Spilornis rufipECTUS*  
*S*
Spotted Harrier  
*Circus assimilis*
Sulawesi Goshawk  
*Accipiter griseiceps*  
*S*
Chinese Goshawk  
*Accipiter soloensis*
Spot-tailed Goshawk  
*Accipiter trinotatus*  
*S*
Grey-throated Goshawk  
*Accipiter griseogularis*  
*M*
Vinous-breasted Sparrowhawk  
*Accipiter rhodogaster*  
*S*
Black Eagle  
*Ictinaetus malayensis*
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<tr>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gurney's Eagle</td>
<td>Aquila gurneyi</td>
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<td>Rufous-bellied Eagle</td>
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<td>Sulawesi Hawk Eagle</td>
<td>Spizaetus lanceolatus</td>
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<td><strong>FALCONIDAE: Falcons and Allies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Spotted Kestrel</td>
<td>Falco moluccensis</td>
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<td>Oriental Hobby</td>
<td>Falco severus</td>
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<td>Peregrine Falcon</td>
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<td><strong>DENDROCYGNIDAE: Whistling-ducks</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wandering Whistling Duck</td>
<td>Dendrocygna arcuata</td>
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<td><strong>ANATIDAE: Ducks, Swans and Geese</strong></td>
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<td>Sunda Teal</td>
<td>Anas gibberifrons</td>
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<td>Pacific Black Duck</td>
<td>Anas superciliosa</td>
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<td><strong>MEGAPODIDAE: Megapodes</strong></td>
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<td>Tabon Scrubfowl</td>
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<td>Dusky Scrubfowl</td>
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<td>Moluccan Scrubfowl</td>
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<td>Maleo</td>
<td>Macrocephalon maleo</td>
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<td><strong>TURNICIDAE: Buttonquails</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Blue-breasted Quail</td>
<td>Coturnix chinensis</td>
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<td>Red Junglefowl</td>
<td>Gallus gallus</td>
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<td>Red-backed Buttonquail</td>
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<td>Barred Buttonquail</td>
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<td>Gallirallus striatus</td>
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<td>Blue-faced Rail</td>
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<td>Black-backed Swamphen</td>
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<td><strong>RECURVIROSTRIDAE: Stilts and Avocets</strong></td>
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<td>White-headed Stilt</td>
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<td><strong>CHARADRIIDAE: Lapwings and Plovers</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grey Plover</td>
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<td>Little Ringed Plover</td>
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<td>Javan Plover</td>
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<td>Lesser Sand Plover</td>
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<td><strong>SCOLOPACIDAE: Sandpipers, Snipes and Allies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Whimbrel</td>
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<td>Eurasian Curlew</td>
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<td>Black-tailed Godwit</td>
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<td>Bar-tailed Godwit</td>
<td>Limosa lapponica</td>
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<td>Common Redshank</td>
<td>Tringa totanus</td>
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<td>Marsh Sandpiper</td>
<td>Tringa stagnatilis</td>
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<td>Common Greenshank</td>
<td>Tringa nebularia</td>
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<td>Wood Sandpiper</td>
<td>Tringa glareola</td>
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<td>Terek Sandpiper</td>
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<td>Common Sandpiper</td>
<td>Actitis hypoleucos</td>
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<td>Grey-tailed Tattler</td>
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<td>Ruddy Turnstone</td>
<td>Arenaria interpres</td>
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<td>Red-necked Stint</td>
<td>Calidris ruficollis</td>
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<td>Long-toed Stint</td>
<td>Calidris subminuta</td>
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</table>
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper Calidris acuminata
Curlew Sandpiper Calidris ferruginea

**STERCORARINAE: Skuas and Jaegers**
Pomarine Jaeger Stercorarius pomarinus

**STERNINAE: Terns**
Whiskered Tern Chlidonias hybridus
White-winged Black Tern Chlidonias leucopeterus
Gull-billed Tern Sterna nilotica
Common Tern Sterna hirundo longipennis
Black-naped Tern Sterna sumatrana
Bridled Tern Sterna anaethetus
Little Tern Sterna albifrons
Greater Crested Tern Sterna bergii

**COLUMBIDAE: Pigeons and Doves**
Rock Dove Columba livia
Red Collared Dove Streptopelia tranquebarica
Spotted Dove Streptopelia chinensis
Brown Cuckoo Dove Macropygia amboinensis albicapilla
Great Cuckoo Dove Reinwardtoena reinwardtii
Sulawesi Black Pigeon Turacoena manadensis
Emerald Dove Chalcophaps indica
Stephan's Dove Chalcophaps stephani
Sulawesi Ground Dove Gallicolumba tristigmata
Pink-necked Green Pigeon Treron vernans
Grey-cheeked Green Pigeon Treron griseicauda
Red-eared Fruit Dove Ptlinopus fischeri fischeri
Ptlinopus fischeri centralis
Maroon-chinned Fruit Dove Ptlinopus subgularis
Scarlet-breasted Fruit Dove Ptlinopus bernsteinii
Superb Fruit Dove Ptlinopus superbus temminckii
Ptlinopus superbus superbus
Blue-capped Fruit Dove Ptlinopus monacha
Grey-headed Fruit Dove Ptlinopus hyogaster
Black-naped Fruit Dove Ptlinopus melanospila
White-bellied Imperial Pigeon Ducula forsteni
Grey-headed Imperial Pigeon Ducula radiata
Green Imperial Pigeon Ducula aenea paulina
Moluccan Imperial Pigeon Ducula perspicillata
Cinnamon-bellied Imperial Pigeon Ducula basilica
Pied Imperial Pigeon Ducula bicolor
Silver-tipped Imperial Pigeon Ducula luctuosa
Sombre Pigeon Cryptophaps poecilorrhoa

**PITTIACIDAE: Parrots, Lories and Cockatoos**
Violet-necked Lory Eos squamata riciniana
Ornate Lorikeet Trichoglossus ornatus
Yellow-and-green Lorikeet Trichoglossus flavoviridis meyeri
Chattering Lory Lorius garrulus garrulus
Red-flanked Lorikeet Charmosyna placentis
White Cockatoo Cacatua alba
Eclectus Parrot Eclectus roratus vosmaeri
Red-cheeked Parrot Geoffroyus geoffroyi cyanicollis
Yellow-breasted Racquet-tail Prioniturus flavicans
Golden-mantled Racquet-tail Prioniturus platurus
Blue-backed Parrot Tanygnathus sumatranus
Great-billed Parrot Tanygnathus megafortynchos
Moluccan King-Parrot Alisterus amboinensis hypophoni
Large Sulawesi Hanging Parrot Loriculus stigmatus
Moluccan Hanging Parrot Loriculus amabilis
Small Sulawesi Hanging Parrot Loriculus exilis

**CUCULIDAE: Old world Cuckoos and Allies**
Himalayan Cuckoo
Plaintive Cuckoo
Rusty-breasted Cuckoo
Brush Cuckoo
Moluccan Cuckoo
Gould’s Bronze Cuckoo
Black-billed Koel
Channel-billed Cuckoo
Yellow-billed Malkoha

**CENTROPODIDAE: Coucals**
- Goliath Coucal
- Lesser Coucal
- Bay Coucal

**TYTONIDAE: Barn Owls and Masked Owls**
- Sulawesi Masked Owl
- Minahassa Masked Owl

**STRIGIDAE: Typical Owls**
- Sulawesi Scops Owl
- Moluccan Scops Owl
- Barking Owl
- Cinnabar Boobook
- Ochre-bellied Boobook
- Halmahera Boobook
- Speckled Boobook

**AEGOTHELIDAE: Owlet-nightjars**
- Moluccan Owlet-Nightjar

**CAPRIMULGIDAE: Nightjars**
- Diabolocal Nightjar
- Great Eared-Nightjar
- Large-tailed Nightjar
- Sulawesi Nightjar
- Savanna Nightjar

**APODIDAE: Swifts and Swiftlets**
- Uniform Swiftlet
- Halmahera Swiftlet
- Sulawesi Swiftlet
- Glossy Swiftlet
- White-throated Needletail
- Purple Needletail
- Asian Palm Swift

**HEMIPROCNIDAE: Treeswifts**
- Grey-rumped Treeswift
- Moustached Treeswift

**HALCYONIDAE: Wood Kingfishers**
- Green-backed Kingfisher
- Scaly-breasted Kingfisher
- Common Paradise Kingfisher
- Lilac-cheeked Kingfisher
- Great-billed Kingfisher
- Ruddy Kingfisher
- Blue-and-white Kingfisher
- Sombre Kingfisher
- Collared Kingfisher
- Beach Kingfisher
- Sacred Kingfisher

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Cuculus saturatus
Cacomantis merulinus
Cacomantis sepulcralis virescens
Cacomantis variolosus variolosus
Cacomantis variolosus infaustus
Cacomantis heinrichi aeruginosus
Chrysococcyy russatus jungei
Eudynamys melanorhyncha
Scythrops novaehollandiae
Phaenicophaeus calyorhyncus
Centropus goliath
Centropus bengalensis
Centropus celebensis
Tyto rosenbergii rosenbergii
Tyto inexpectata
Otus manadensis
Otus magicus leucospilus
Ninox connivens rufostigata
Ninox ios
Ninox ochracea
Ninox hypogramma
Ninox punctulata
Aegotheles crinifrons
Eurostopodous diabolicus
Eurostopodous macropterus
Caprimulgus macrurus
Caprimulgus celebensis
Caprimulgus affinis
Aerodramus vanikorensis
Aerodramus infuscata
Aerodramus sororum
Aerodramus esculenta
Hirundapus caudacutus
Hirundapus celebensis
Hemiprocne longipennis
Hemiprocne mystacea
Actenoides monachus monachus
Actenoides monachus capucinus
Actenoides princeps princeps
Actenoides princeps erythrorhamphus
Tanysiptera galatea browningi
Cittura cyanotis cyanotis
Pelargopsis melanorhyncha
Halcyon coromanda
Halcyon diops
Halcyon funebris
Todiramphus chloris
Halcyon saurophaga
Todiramphus sanctus
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<td><strong>ALCEDINIDAE: Small Kingfisher</strong></td>
<td>Sulawesi Dwarf Kingfisher</td>
<td>Ceyx fallax</td>
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<td>Common Kingfisher</td>
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<td><strong>MEROPIDAE: Bee-eaters</strong></td>
<td>Blue-tailed Bee-eater</td>
<td>Merops philippinus</td>
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<td>Rainbow Bee-eater</td>
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<td>Purple-bearded Bee-eater</td>
<td>Meropogon forsteni</td>
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<td><strong>CORACIIDAE: Rollers</strong></td>
<td>Purple-winged Roller</td>
<td>Coracias temminckii</td>
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<td>Dollarbird</td>
<td>Eurystomus orientalis</td>
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<td>Purple Dollarbird</td>
<td>Eurystomus azureus</td>
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<td><strong>BUCEROTIDAE: Hornbills</strong></td>
<td>Sulawesi Dwarf Hornbill</td>
<td>Penelopides exarhatus</td>
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<td>Knobbed Hornbill</td>
<td>Aceros cassidix</td>
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<td>Blyth's Hornbill</td>
<td>Rhyticeros plicatus</td>
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<td><strong>PICIDAE: Woodpeckers</strong></td>
<td>Sulawesi Pygmy Woodpecker</td>
<td>Dendrocopos temminckii</td>
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<td>Ashy Woodpecker</td>
<td>Mullueripicus fulvus</td>
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<td><strong>PITTIDAE: Pitta</strong></td>
<td>Red-bellied Pitta</td>
<td>Pitta erythrogaster celebensis</td>
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<td>Ivory-breasted Pitta</td>
<td>Pitta erythrogaster rufiventris</td>
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<td><strong>HIRUNDINIDAE: Swallows and Martins</strong></td>
<td>Barn Swallow</td>
<td>Hirundo rustica</td>
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<td>Hirundo tahitica</td>
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<td><strong>MOTACILLIDAE: Wagtails and Pipits</strong></td>
<td>Eastern Yellow Wagtail</td>
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<td>Grey Wagtail</td>
<td>Motacilla cinerea</td>
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<td><strong>CAMPEPHAGIDAE: Cuckooshrikes, Trillers and Minivets</strong></td>
<td>Moluccan Cuckooshrike</td>
<td>Coracina fortis magnirostris</td>
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<td>Cerulean Cuckooshrike</td>
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<td>Halmahera Cuckooshrike</td>
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<td>Pygmy Cuckooshrike</td>
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<td>Rufous-bellied Triller</td>
<td>Lalage aurea</td>
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<td><strong>PYCNONOTIDAE: Bulbuls</strong></td>
<td>Sooty-headed Bulbul</td>
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<td>Northern Golden Bulbul</td>
<td>Alphoixus longorostris chloris</td>
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<td><strong>DICRURIDAE: Drongos</strong></td>
<td>Sulawesi Drongo</td>
<td>Dicrurus montanus</td>
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<td>Spangled Drongo</td>
<td>Dicrurus bracteatus atrocaeruleus</td>
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<td>Hair-crested Drongo</td>
<td>Dicrurus hottentotus leucops</td>
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<td><strong>ORIOLIDAE: Old World Orioles</strong></td>
<td>Dusky-Brown Oriole</td>
<td>Oriolus phaeochromus</td>
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<td>Black-naped Oriole</td>
<td>Oriolus chinensis</td>
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**CORVIDAE: Crows**
- Slender-billed Crow: *Corvus enca celebensis*
- Piping Crow: *Corvus typicus* M
- Long-billed Crow: *Corvus validus* M

**PARADISAEIDAE: Birds of Paradise**
- Paradise Crow: *Lycocorax pyrrhopterus* M
- Standardwing Bird of Paradise: *Semioptera wallacei* M

**TIMALIIDAE: Babblers**
- Sulawesi Babbler: *Trichastoma celebense* S
- Malia: *Mala grata stresemanni* S
- Malia: *Mala grata recondita* S
- Geomalia: *Geomalia heinrichi* S

**TURDIDAE: Thrushes and Chats**
- Great Shortwing: *Heinrichia calligyna calligyna* S
- Blue Rock-Thrush: *Monticola solitarius*
- Red-backed Thrush: *Zoothera erythronota* S
- Sulawesi Thrush: *Cataponera turdoides* S
- Pied Bushchat: *Saxicola caprata*

**PARDALOTIDAE: Australian Warblers and Allies**
- Golden-bellied Gerygone: *Gerygone sulphurea flaveola*

**SYLVIIDAE: Old World Warblers**
- Chestnut-backed Bush Warbler: *Bradypterus castaneus castaneus* S
- Gray's Grasshopper Warbler: *Locustella fasciolata*
- Australasian Reed Warbler: *Acrocephalus stentoreus celebensis*
- Mountain Tailorbird: *Orthotomus cuculatus riedeli*
- Sulawesi Leaf Warbler: *Phylloscopus sarasinorum* S

**CISTICOLIDAE: African Warblers**
- Zitting Cisticola: *Cisticola juncidis*
- Golden-headed Cisticola: *Cisticola exilis*

**MUSCICAPIDAE: Old World Flycatchers**
- Grey-streaked Flycatcher: *Musica griseisticta*
- Island Flycatcher: *Eumyias panayensis*
- Snowy-browed Flycatcher: *Ficedula hyperythra*
- Little Pied Flycatcher: *Ficedula westermanni*
- Blue-fronted Flycatcher: *Cyornis hoevelli* S
- Matinan Flycatcher: *Cyornis sanfordi* S
- Sulawesi (Mangrove) Blue Flycatcher: *Cyornis omissa* S

**MONARCHIDAE: Monarch Flycatchers**
- Pale Blue Monarch: *Hypothymis puella* S
- White-naped Monarch: *Monarcha pileatus pileatus*
- Spectacled Monarch: *Monarcha trivirgatus bimaculatus*
- Slaty Flycatcher: *Myiagra galeata galeata* M
- Shining Flycatcher: *Piezorhynchus alecto alecto*

**RHIPIDURIDAE: Fantails**
- Willie Wagtail: *Rhipidura leucophrys*
- Rusty-bellied Fantail: *Rhipidura teysmanni* S

**PETROICIDAE: Australian Robins**
- Citrine Canary Flycatcher: *Culicicapa helianthea*

**PACHYCEPHALIDAE: Whistlers**
- Yellow-flanked Whistler: *Hylocitrea bonensis* S
- Maroon-backed Whistler: *Coracornis raveni* S
- Yellow-vented Whistler: *Pachycephala sulphuriventer* S
- Golden Whistler: *Pachycephala pectoralis mentalis*
Drab Whistler

**ARTAMIDAE: Woodswallows and Allies**
White-breasted Woodswallow
Ivory-backed Woodswallow

**STURNIDAE: Starlings and Mynas**
Moluccan Starling
Short-tailed Starling
Asian Glossy Starling
Metallic Starling
Sulawesi Crested Myna
White-necked Myna
Fiery-browed Myna
Finch-billed Myna

**MELIPHAGIDAE: Honeyeaters**
Lesser Sulawesi Honeyeater
Greater Sulawesi Honeyeater
White-streaked Friarbird
Dusky Honeyeater
Sulawesi Myzomela

**NECTARINIIDAE: Sunbirds**
Plain-throated Sunbird
Black Sunbird
Olive-backed Sunbird
Crimson Sunbird

**DICAEIDAE: Flowerpeckers**
Yellow-sided Flowerpecker
Crimson-crowned Flowerpecker
Halmahera Flowerpecker
Grey-sided Flowerpecker

**ZOSTEROPIDAE: White-eyes and Dark-eyes**
Mountain White-eye
Lemon-bellied White-eye
Black-ringed White-eye
Cream-throated White-eye
Black-fronted White-eye
Streak-headed White-eye

**PASSERINAE: Sparrow**
Eurasian Tree Sparrow

**ESTRILDINAE: Estrildine Finches**
Blue-faced Parrot-Finch
Black-faced Munia
Scaly-breasted Munia
Black-headed Munia
Pale-headed Munia
Java Sparrow

**FRINGILLIDAE: Typical Finches and Allies**
Mountain Serin

**Selected mammals**
Spectral Tarsier
Moor Macaque
Sulawesi Crested Macaque
Birds of the tour

1 Wallace's Standardwing
2 Red-bellied Pitta
3 Minahassa Owl
4 Diabolical Nightjar
5 Purple Dollarbird

Red-backed Thrush and Green-backed Kingfisher, Tangkoko ©Rob Hutchinson