

# Raja Ampat – The Paradise of West Papua

Naturetrek Tour Report

4th – 17th March 2020

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Bryde's Whale



Wilson's Bird of Paradise



Tassled Wobbegong Shark



Spinner Dolphin

Report & images by Alison Steel



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Tour participants: Alison Steel (Leader) and Chas Anderson (Cruise Leader) with 13 Naturetrek clients

## Introduction

Guests on this inaugural 14-day tour of Raja Ampat enjoyed some of the most pristine and unspoiled scenery that Indonesia has to offer. There were some fantastic sightings of cetaceans, of at least five different species: Indo-pacific Bottlenose, Pantropical Spotted and Spinner Dolphins plus Omura's and Bryde's Whales. The group also enjoyed wonderful snorkelling over breath-taking, colourful coral reefs full of life; vast shoals of fish in many colours swam alongside Green and Hawksbill Turtles, Black-tip and White-tip Reef Sharks, Moray Eels, Nudibranchs and Rays. We visited the island of Waigeo in search of Red and Wilson's Birds-of-Paradise, seeing Glossy Manocude, parrots, cockatoos and friarbirds too. Our ever helpful boat crew were always on hand to enhance our experiences, during the land based excursions as well as on and in the water. We were truly privileged to have visited such a beautiful part of the world.

### Day 1

Wednesday 4th March

London to Doha

This evening the group met at Heathrow to board an overnight flight to Doha.

### Day 2

Thursday 5th March

Doha to Jakarta

After arriving into Doha and completing transfer formalities, we had a short time to wait before boarding our flight to Jakarta. It was a fairly quiet flight and most people managed to stretch out across more than one seat to get some sleep.

In Jakarta it was slightly disconcerting to have our temperatures scanned before we could proceed through, however it was painless and relatively quick. We had to collect our luggage then go up a couple of floors to check in for our flight to Sorong. There was a little confusion over the gate number as the signs and boarding passes differed, but we did find the right gate and got on the busy flight. Lots of people were wearing face masks, making it a little surreal.

### Day 3

Friday 6th March

Sorong

This morning we flew into Sorong. There was a lovely orange sunrise as we came in and, as it got light, a multitude of scattered islands could be seen below. On landing it didn't take too long for the luggage to arrive then, without much difficulty, we all piled into taxis for the short journey to the hotel. Roads were the usual muddle of scooters and mopeds mixed through the cars, everything whizzing past in a bit of a blur after two nights of travelling.

After checking in to our hotel, we had some time to relax, catch up on sleep or explore as preferred. In the early afternoon some of the group met up for a wander around town, not going too far as it looked like heavy rain was

due. Lots of people greeted us as we walked along the street, some wanting to touch us or have a picture taken. Near the docks we saw Lesser Frigatebirds fly over. Along a colourfully painted jetty, from which various stilted houses and businesses branched, were children jumping off the end into the sea. Some were quite shy, but others were happy to show off. Pacific Swallows swooped low over the water alongside the jetty, while some distance out to sea were a number of terns. As the raindrops started, most of us turned back towards the hotel for a cold drink and to cool down, although a few continued on to explore further. Tree Sparrows were seen by the pool, and throughout town, with Common Myna, White-breasted Woodswallow and Willie Wagtail being seen around the hotel.

Meeting for dinner, we had a chance to say hello to our cruise leader, Chas, before going through to the dining room. A slightly chaotic meal ensued, with courses coming in random orders and dishes arriving intermittently, although the food was good, and so was the company. It was then time for an early night, ready for the morning.

## Day 4

Saturday 7th March

### Sorong to Gam

This morning most of the group took a trip to Taman Wisata Alam Sorong, a forested area just outside the town. It was a damp, but warm, morning, with some mosquitoes making themselves known just after we got out of the cars. The air was filled with a whole host of insect and bird calls, however not many were visible. Alan spotted a small black bird and a few people had views of a Pinon Imperial Pigeon around an old car park area, before we followed the main track through the forest. A red dragonfly, some large crickets, a striped spider and some butterflies were seen along the way, as well as Spangled Drongo, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and an Olive-backed Sunbird that was flitting about an open area. Most of the parrots were too high up and fast flying to identify, but it was possible to pick out the noisy Eclectus Parrot.

As we returned to the hotel we came to a road block just before the end of our journey. A large tree had fallen over, completely blocking the road and bringing down power lines. One taxi was able to take the back streets low down while the other had to take a twisty route over a hill and down the other side, to come out past the blockage. Despite this, we all made it back to the hotel in plenty of time for breakfast.

After breakfast there was some free time to relax or re-pack before meeting at reception to head to the boat. Once again we piled into several taxis for the journey to the dock. At the jetty steps we met some of the crew and were introduced to some others once we made the RIB journey out to the Mermaid I.

After being assigned our cabins we sat down to a tasty lunch while preparations for departure were completed. The safety briefing was moved up the schedule as Chas started to spot cetaceans up ahead, both whales and dolphins. The first group we came to were Spinner Dolphins. A large group of around 50 surfaced periodically, a few jumping and a couple came to bow ride for a short time – a great start! As we watched them, other fins could be seen further away, as well as some whales rolling through the water. The larger dorsal fins indicated Indo-pacific Bottlenose Dolphins. There were about five that stayed with us on and off for a while. There were also at least three different individual whales, most likely Omura's, however we didn't get a good enough view to see the diagnostic features.

Carrying on, the wind started to pick up, making it a little choppier. Splashes and circling Lesser Frigatebirds ahead revealed jumping Yellowfin Tuna. Through this activity soared a Streaked Shearwater and we came across



another species of dolphin - Pan-tropical Spotted. These were in a slightly more energetic mood, with some doing high leaps out of the water and a number bow riding. As they dispersed we had to make a quick stop to fish someone's sunhat out of the sea after it blew off their head as the wind picked up. A bit of a squall blew in, sending us to the covered back deck for shelter. A slightly rougher couple of hours passed until things settled down shortly before dinner. The only sightings in this time were more Frigatebirds and a flock of Black Noddy.

Dinner was served buffet style, had with plenty of conversation. Later in the evening we reached our anchorage for the night in a sheltered spot just off Gam.

## Day 5

Sunday 8th March

### Raja Ampat

This morning started with first breakfast (for some) before we headed out for our first snorkel at Frewin Bonda. The morning sunlight really brought out the colours in the corals, both hard and soft, as we drifted with the current past the island. It was difficult to know where to look as there was so much activity on the reef. Parrotfish, pairs of Butterflyfish, Angelfish, long, thin Trumpet and Cornet fish, clouds of tiny jellies (that occasionally stung), as well as bigger, coloured jellyfish, Boxfish and Anemone Fish along with sponges and tubeworms. There was a bit of a current on the corner that we had to kick through and some of the group saw the tail of a shark right under the rocky corner. Eventually it was time to drag ourselves out of the water and return to the boat so that we could shower and change before main breakfast.

We had to register with the national park authorities before we could go any further, so proceeded to the village of Waisai, only to find that the official who needed to stamp our paper was in church (it was a Sunday after all) and we had to wait at anchor for the formalities to be completed. It was a lovely morning and we were able to sea watch from the decks - Eastern Osprey and White-bellied Sea Eagle were seen by some, as well as more terns and frigatebirds. It was nearly lunchtime by the time we got underway. Heading out into to the edge of the drop off Chas had a brief sighting of a baleen whale, but unfortunately it disappeared before we could get a good look. There were some dolphins swimming inside the reef, so we headed in to watch, only for them to head out to deeper water. They were still there when we made our way out again, so we had some lovely views of more Spinner Dolphins. We stayed with them for some time then moved on. Further out we came across another pod, however they were less interested in playing, so we only had a short interaction with them.



Heading towards our afternoon snorkel site we saw a small flock of Red-necked Phalarope, some Pied Imperial Pigeon flying between islands, more Lesser Frigatebirds and some Sulphur-crested Cockatoos high up on the hillside.



On approach to the get-in point, we watched the Frigatebirds soaring over the island. Just before the second boat of snorkellers got in the water, a White-bellied Sea Eagle flew low over the trees just above them (Alan had a great view from the deck of the boat of one fishing). The water was a little cooler this afternoon and the colours more muted due to it being a cloudier day. Still lots of wonderful things to

look at however; some whip coral, shoals of tiny fry just below the surface, fish chasing each other, an eel coming out of a hole in the rock, feeding fish, a cleaning station, Blue Spotted Stingrays hiding under rocks and many shoals of brightly coloured fish. As we got back into the RIBs, a small flock of Singing Starlings were calling from the bushes growing on the five rocks formation that emerged from the sea bed.

It was just a short journey up the coast to our anchorage for the night, then time to relax and find out more about whales in a talk from Chas before dinner. A first checklist was completed after dinner, but not taking too long as it was to be an early start in the morning.

## Day 6

Monday 9th March

### Raja Ampat – Waigeo & Gam

A very early start this morning to depart the boat by 5am. As we travelled the short distance to shore, trails of phosphorescence could be seen in the wake of our RIBs. It was a bit of an uphill hike to the current lek site in the dark. Very quickly it got very warm and some started to wonder if we'd ever reach the top! All around us we could hear the forest noises; frogs, insects and the occasional bird call. As it started to get light more birds joined the chorus, ushering us into the area below the lekking tree.

Quite quickly we started to hear the male calling, however it was a little while before he came into view; a very resplendent Red Bird-of-Paradise, with his green and yellow head and trailing, red tail feathers. He'd call loudly from a hidden perch then rush into the open area, display briefly before disappearing back into the foliage, however over the time we were there some great views were enjoyed, and many pictures taken.

There is a shortage of vehicles on the island, so we needed to shuttle to the next lek. The first group set off to go ahead while those who remained behind also saw a Glossy Mantled Manocude, very quickly seen off the display tree by the Red BOP male. Even taking it easy back down the track, there was still a wait for the vehicles to return from dropping off the first group, so it was a perfect opportunity to watch some of the other forest birds crossing the open area above the road - Hooded Butcherbird, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Pied Imperial Pigeon,

New Guinea Friarbird, Red-cheeked Parrot and Claret-breasted Fruit Dove, to name few. There were also some dragonflies and butterflies, including a lovely, large, green and yellow bird wing species.

The drive to the next site took us up, and down, some steep forest tracks, and past the occasional vegetable garden in cleared areas at the edge of the forest. It was then a relatively short, easy walk to the blind for the Wilson's Bird-of-Paradise. The early group had some great views as the bird cleared his area of undesirable leaves, flicking them away with a toss of his bill, calling and displaying. As the last people arrived it gave a short display and flew high up into the canopy. For most of the next hour it gave teasing glimpses, but no good views then, just before the second group left, it came down a final time, clearing away more leaves and calling loudly from a low branch, showing off its pale gape.

Back on the boat it was time for a very late breakfast before we started south towards Mansuar. A short sighting was had of some feeding Indo-pacific Bottlenose Dolphins and it was lovely to watch a flock of Greater Crested Tern that were resting on a floating log, occasionally flying off only to then circle around and land again, with the occasional spot of bickering going on.

A distant flock of birds and splashes created by jumping tuna drew our attention, so we headed in that direction. As we drew closer the birds started to fly off, however off towards the islands a blow was spotted. We watched as the whale surfaced several times before disappearing from sight. While we waited for it to resurface we witnessed a Marlin jumping clean out of the water. Another whale was then seen too, with, at times, three being seen together. One grouping was almost certainly a mother and calf. After staying in the vicinity for a little while, we left them to it at lunch time, turning to follow the shelf towards Sawan Derek. Near the island we started to see some other blows, one particularly tall. Eventually we had some whales surfacing near the boat, although picking out distinctive features was a challenge.

This afternoon's snorkel was along a reef that was fairly shallow on top then sloped off. A great number of fish, both in terms of variety and volume, were gathered near the edge of the slope. Some notable species include Great Sweetlips, Black-tipped Reef Shark, Green Turtle, Napoleon Wrasse and Barracuda. Again there was a



great reluctance to leave this underwater treasure trove of marine life.

Back on board there was time to dry off and have a snack before we set off again. A Leatherback Turtle was spotted in the water by Chas, as well as a Sailfish tail fin. There was a lovely pinky-orange sunset to enjoy as we travelled toward Gam for the night.

Dinner was delicious as always. We then sang Happy Birthday to Sue (what a great day for a birthday) before completing the day's checklist and identifying some more fish.

## Day 7

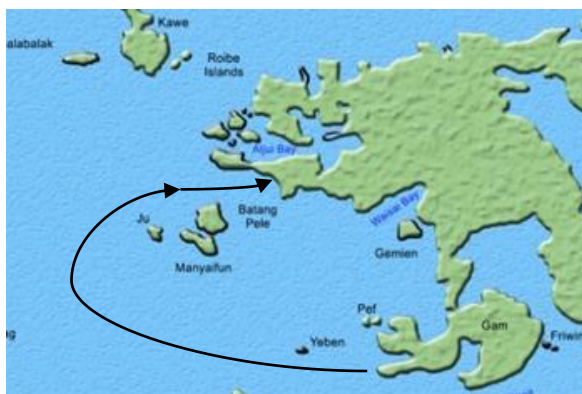
Tuesday 10th March

Raja Ampat – Gam to Wofoh

We started this morning with another snorkel, however this one was a little different again as the reef started under the roots of the mangrove trees. The red mangrove trees provide shelter to a range of young fish and a local speciality is the Archer Fish that shoots water at insects to knock them out of the air, allowing it to eat them from the water surface. Colourful soft corals grew from the roots and, at times, we seemed to be swimming through clouds of fish. Two species of Cardinal Fish are also found here – the Pajama and the Orbicular. An octopus and a turtle were seen by some while Alan watched birds and viewed corals from the RIB.

Once back on board we dried off and ate breakfast as we started round the South West corner of Gam and Waigeo. We were going against the wind and the sea had white caps, making cetacean spotting tricky. A possible Dolphin Fish was seen going under the boat, showing as an elongated, turquoise-blue shape as it sped under the bow, and the crew spotted some rays on the water surface as we went for lunch.

As we approached our destination for the day, some fast moving Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins sped round the bay then started feeding not far from the boat. After watching them for a short time we started to move on when a baleen whale showed up. The wind had now calmed, so we could easily see the pale blue shape moving under the water just in front of the boat. It was possible to follow it, occasionally losing it then finding it again as it changed direction. In good light the markings showed up really well - definitely Omura's Whale. Beautiful! Following the shape underwater, it was possible to see when it would resurface, sometimes very close to us, making it a great opportunity for some photos.



Further into the bay, we made our way to the back of a small island for our afternoon snorkel. We started near the beach then used the prevailing current to gently follow around the edge of the shelf. A couple of Green Turtle were seen, as well as a cuttlefish, False Anemone Fish, Eight-banded Butterflyfish, lots of corals and many more fish species. There were a couple of other small boats around, however they left before dark. We enjoyed a lovely sunset prior to the evening presentation and a dinner of

barbecued skewers. The checklist was completed and some more fish identified before it was time for bed.

## Day 8

Wednesday 11th March

### Raja Ampat – Alju Bay to Penemu

This morning the Mermaid I departed early for our next destination, while some of the group were still asleep. There were some Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin feeding as we rounded the headland - likely the same group as yesterday. Further round, we saw some more baleen whales, occasionally surfacing then staying out of view for some time. We eventually saw about five of them, including a mother and calf. Most likely they were Omura's Whale, but we couldn't be sure. They weren't interested in us so we left them to it.

Carrying on into Alju Bay, we made of way to 'The Channel' for our morning snorkel. We travelled further up in the RIBs then used the current to carry us along back towards the boat. There were lots of soft corals, sponges and tunicates, which in turn attract in a number of Nudibranch species, some quite large (for a sea slug). The

coral gardens were full of colour, as well as lots of fish. Lionfish, Scorpionfish, Sea Snake and Anemonefish were among the highlights. It was such a fantastic place that we really didn't want to get out of the water. Returning to the boat, we got dried in time for lunch then we set off to visit one of the local pearl fisheries. Just as we arrived, there was a group of dolphins languidly swimming around near the marker buoys. We watched them until it was time to head ashore. The low tide made it a bit of a challenge to get onto the jetty, however the crew, as usual, were there to assist us. It was really interesting to learn about how they farm the oysters and cultivate the pearls, as well as the grading system for determining quality and value. It's one of the few local options for paid employment and they work with the local communities to make it a sustainable practice. To deter trouble and protect their hard work they've created their own security force.



Back out near the entrance to the bay we had an afternoon snorkel. The first run was a little challenging as the current picked up, making it a bit tricky to watch anything as the current carried us along at some speed, so we got back in the RIBs and moved around the corner to a more sheltered area. There were some nice fish here, such as Oriental Sweetlips, Checkerboard Wrasse, Bridled Monocle Bream and Scissortail Sergeant, as well as a Blue-spot Hermit Crab and Boring Giant Clams.

For the rest of the afternoon we travelled south west towards Penemu, ready for the morning. There were some distant whale blows, but nothing close by. The sunset was beautiful, oranges and pinks over a nearby island. The evening presentation was on dolphins, followed by a lovely dinner and completing the checklist. There were also some stars out tonight; some of the constellations were recognisable, being the same as we get in the UK.

## Day 9

Thursday 12th March

### Raja Ampat – Penemu to Batanta

After a quick first breakfast, we set off on the RIBs for Penemu. The rock formations are amazing; seeing how the trees can grow from tiny cracks in this inhospitable environment is incredible. From the jetty we started the walk to Paiynemo viewpoint. Very quickly we stopped as a Common Paradise Kingfisher, with its long tail, was spotted in the trees at the side of the path. Starting up the steps, you could see where trees were growing up through the wooden steps, creating almost a slalom course at times. Climbing at our own paces, a variety of bird life was seen by different individuals. Coming out onto the platform this wonderful view opened up before us. The water around the scattered islands was in different hues of blues and greens. Olive-backed Sunbird, Spice



Imperial Pigeon, Mimic Honeyeater and Moluccan Starling were seen before we slowly made our way back down towards the boats. Taking a scenic route back to the main boat, we got a closer look at the rock formations as well as some more bird life, including Little Egret, Brahminy Kite, Eastern Osprey and Striated Heron.



After breakfast we headed to Keruo Channel for a snorkel. There was some current, but it was gentle enough that it kept us at a nice pace. Some areas had little feeding frenzies going on where damselfish eggs had been laid. A few more new fish species were found, such as Bumpheaded Parrotfish, Pyramid Angelfish and Papuan Scorpionfish. Towards the end was it a little disconcerting when it started to rain and it took a few moments to register where the sound was coming from.

Back on the boat it was time to dry off and have lunch before we started our journey south. The sea had a slight swell, so hard to spot cetaceans and nothing much was seen, other than the odd flying fish and a Brown Noddy amidst a mixed seabird flock. Towards the end of the afternoon we arrived at Inus Island. After a snack it was time to get back in the water. Going with the slight current again, we followed the beach line along the reef, floating over a mix of hard and soft corals. A large White-tailed Stingray, Map & Black-spotted Pufferfish, Three-spot Angelfish, Painted Spiny Lobster, Hawksbill Turtle, Snowflake Moray and some Boring Giant Clams were among those that we could identify from the thousands of reef inhabitants.

Once back on board, we set off for Batanta and were greeted by a large, wide spread pod of Spinner Dolphins. They were in a playful mood and came to bow-ride. We stayed with them for a good amount of time, before we had to head on.

There was some time to relax before another lovely dinner, followed by the checklist and further fish identification.

## Day 10

## Friday 13th March

### Raja Ampat – Batanta

This morning everyone was ready promptly for our morning snorkel. Taking the RIBs around to the other side of the island, we got in the water. There were five 'target' fish suggested for this morning. A Boxfish was spotted fairly quickly, then as we followed round the side of the island there was the shout of "Manta!" as a large black shadow glided beneath some of the group. Towards the front of the island, where the reef levelled off over a ridge, we found Titan Triggerfish, Star Pufferfish and a variety of Angel and butterfly fish. Daphne found a Tasselled Wobbegong draped across a rock. It was creatively camouflaged making it hard for some to spot, but we were all able to get a good look before it decided to make its way under a coral. Where the reef turned into a flattish sandy area a Manta was making use of the cleaning station, remaining for a good while, which allowed everyone to watch it as it swam in slow circles beneath us.

After breakfast we started to make our way around the west side of Batanta, to the Sagewin Strait that runs along its south coast. Travelling between the two islands of Batanta and Salawati, we were amazed by how little



development and settlements that there were. The hills are covered in trees of a number of different species, all looking very tropical and exotic. The one thing that looked slightly out of place was a large building on one of the islands. On closer examination a large statue could be seen by it and we eventually worked out that it was some kind of church facility. Some light rain blew

through quickly on a couple of occasions, but otherwise we had a mainly dry day. As we got near the end of the strait, a small container ship came past just as Chas spotted a whale blow. We had to wait for it to pass before we could check it out, by which time the whale had disappeared. Continuing on, more blows were spotted ahead and we did find two more mid-sized baleen whales, following them for some time, however the swell made their reappearance difficult to predict and we weren't able to positively identify the species.

Rounding Ayemi Island, we moored in the bay for the night. A short RIB excursion was taken along the shore, passed the village and around a local fishing vessel also anchored in the bay. It was interesting to find out that the fish are stored in a large netted area at the back of the boat to keep fresh until it's time to return to port.

Back on the boat, the lightning outside competed with the evening presentation, tonight on Alfred Wallace. Dinner was to the usual high standard, being both well cooked and flavourful. The filling in of the checklist and fish id completed the evening.

## Day 11

Saturday 14th March

### Raja Ampat – Batanta to Waisai

This morning started on the move, as we headed around the NE corner of Batanta, following the shelf line. Around 0830 there was a shout of 'Blow' as evidence of a whale surfacing was spotted. Several more were seen in the same vicinity so we headed in that direction. Soon we could see the backs and dorsal fins too. From photos it was possible to count the rostral ridges to determine that at least some were Bryde's Whale. One or two surfaced very near the boat, giving us great views and allowing us to clearly hear their breaths. Some Mantas jumped high out of the water from time to time, one very close to the boat. It doesn't seem possible that these huge creatures can propel themselves completely out of the water.

Eventually we had to move on, heading for Birie Island. There are a number of Eco-resorts and home stays here, as well as a lot of birds calling from the trees. It was a little less clear today, but we did still find some baby squid floating through the water, as well as a good number of fish species including a Snowflake Moray. The current was a little stronger across the corner of the island then tapered out at a sandy area between reef patches.

Following lunch back on the boat, we again headed out across the Dampier Strait. Quite quickly there were signs of whales, some of which we followed for a while. Large flocks of mixed seabirds were frantically feeding on small schools of fish, also pursued by both whales and larger tuna. It was incredible to watch. The small fish could be seen leaping out of the water and skittering across the surface in large groups, creating a disturbance on the water surface.



On reaching Yenbuba we got ready for another snorkel. Nearing the jetty, we could see a large group of people, some in the water and some on the jetty with lots of kit. On closer inspection it appeared that they were filming something – we never did work out what! The water here was a bit cloudy, but several Hawksbill Turtle were seen, as well as Titan and Yellowmargin Triggerfish, a Red Lionfish, Anemonefish, Parrotfish, Boxfish, Fusiliers, Sweetlips and Wrasses. One of the turtles swam alongside some of the

group for a time, without seeming phased by their presence, which was an incredible thrill. Another turtle came up to breathe, staying on the surface for several minutes before diving back down towards the sea floor. The jetty provided shelter for lots of fish, with some bigger fish congregating nearby and the uprights are an ideal growing platform for some beautiful soft corals in reds and purples.

Finally we had to head back toward Waisai. The sun was starting to go down, colouring the sky in a pallet of yellows, pinks and oranges. To cap it all off, a pod of Spinner Dolphins decided that they were feeling like some interaction, coming in to bow ride. Some were jumping and spinning, while others leapt through the last rays of the sun illuminating the water. A lovely end to another great day.

## Day 12

Sunday 15th March

### Raja Ampat to Sorong

As we awoke the boat was moving position to our snorkel site at Mioskon Island. As we floated over the reef, a number of people were happy to realise that they could now recognise a good number of the different fish species and have an idea of where to start with identification for those they didn't. Several eels were seen amongst the corals, as well as puffer and porcupine fish, Sweetlips, parrotfish, groupers and butterfly fish. On the island Pied Imperial Pigeons are known to roost and Alan found a few more species, as well as fruit bat during his bird walk.

During breakfast we headed out into the Dampier Strait, following the shelf edge. Again there are lots of seabirds in feeding frenzies as they dived for small fish driven up to the surface by bigger fish, usually tuna. At times you can see the rippled water where they've jumped out to try and avoid being eaten. Fairly quickly we started to sight blows - surfacing whales. Some we watched for over half an hour as they came up for a breath then dived, searching for where they would resurface. It's amazing how quickly you can lose track of a 40ft animal. Having watched several animals relatively close by over the morning, we took a short break for lunch then quickly picked up more whales. Some were pairs together, often mother and a calf of varying sizes.

During the heat of mid-afternoon we came across a large pod of dolphins - a mix of Spinner and Spotted Dolphins that were definitely in a playful mood. They very happily came in to bow ride, staying with us for quite

some time. A lot of leaping and splashing was happening all around us; again some very small youngsters among them. A good number also showed cookie cutter shark bites and scars.

Eventually we had to turn toward Sorong for the final leg of our journey. There were still whales appearing sporadically, however most were some way off. We arrived into the harbour just as the sun was setting over Batanta; an absolutely spectacular end to a fantastic cruise.



As it would be Jonathan's birthday in the morning we sang 'Happy Birthday' this evening, complete with cake and a card. Then it was, unfortunately, time to pack before the journey home tomorrow.

## Day 13

Monday 16th March

### Sorong to Doha

This morning we woke up at 5:30am for breakfast, before departing the boat at 6:00am for Sorong airport where most of the group caught a morning flight to Jakarta then onto Doha, except for Alan and Jill who were staying on for a copy of days in Sorong and Alison who was visiting another part of Indonesia.

## Day 14

Tuesday 17th March

Arrive back in London

Favourite memories from the tour are:

Sarah – the Tassled Wobbegong and the corals

Jonathan – the corals, rays and the Star Pufferfish

Val – achieving a life time ambition to see birds-of-paradise

Simon – standing on the bow of the ship watching the bow riding dolphins directly below

Chris – Black sea slug

Sue – the corals and the mixed pod of dolphins on the last full day at sea

Jill – Wilson's Bird-of-Paradise

Alan – seeing the Manta Ray jumping

Steve – the lionfish and the scorpionfish

Hilary – Wilson's Bird-of-Paradise as well as the mangrove and channel snorkels

Mark – Wilson's Bird-of-Paradise

Daphne- snorkelling at Yenbuba jetty

Yvonne – Wilson's Bird-of-Paradise and watching the turtle come up to breath

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## Species Lists

## Birds

	E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic I=Introduced		March 2020										
	Common name	Scientific name	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1	Glossy Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia esculenta</i>											
2	Uniform Swiftlet	<i>Aerodramus vanikorensis</i>		?	From 10 - 15 we were seeing swiftlets, but not in enough detail to know which of the two species they were								
3	Dusky Scrubfowl	<i>Megapodius freycinet</i>				H							
4	Spice Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula myristicivora</i>							4+		?		
5	Pinon's Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula pinon</i>		✓		✓				✓			
6	Pied Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula bicolor</i>			✓	✓		✓				✓	
7	Claret-breasted Fruit Dove	<i>Ptilinopus viridis</i>				2							
8	Wompoo Fruit Dove	<i>Ptilinopus magnificus</i>								2			
9	Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>		✓	6		✓		6	✓	450+	✓	
10	Black Noddy	<i>Anous minutus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	1000+	✓		✓	✓	
11	Brown Noddy	<i>Anous stolidus</i>							1				
12	Greater Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Bridled Tern	<i>Onychoprion anaethetus</i>		✓	15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
14	Black-naped Tern	<i>Sterna sumatrana</i>			2						✓	✓	
15	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	
16	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>										✓	
17	Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>			✓						?	✓	
18	Streaked Shearwater	<i>Calonectris leucomelas</i>		✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
19	Lesser Frigatebird	<i>Fregata ariel</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
20	Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓s	
21	Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>							✓				
22	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>							✓				
23	Pacific Reef Heron	<i>Egretta sacra</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
24	Great-billed Heron	<i>Ardea sumatrana</i>								✓			
25	Eastern Osprey	<i>Pandion cristatus</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
26	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic I=Introduced			March 2020										
	Common name	Scientific name	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
27	White-bellied Sea Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>			2+			✓	✓	2	✓	✓	
28	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>					✓	✓					
29	Blyth's Hornbill	<i>Rhyticeros plicatus</i>				✓	2		✓		✓		
30	Collared Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus chloris</i>						2					
31	Beach Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus saurophagus</i>									2?	✓	
32	Common Paradise Kingfisher	<i>Tanysiptera galatea</i>							✓				
33	Rufous-bellied Kookabura	<i>Dacelo gaudichaud</i>								✓			
34	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	<i>Cacatua galerita</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		
35	Eclectus Parrot	<i>Eclectus roratus</i>		✓		✓			✓				
36	Red-cheeked Parrot	<i>Geoffroyus geoffroyi</i>				✓							
37	Violet-necked Lory	<i>Eos squamata</i>							✓				
38	White-breasted Woodswallow	<i>Artamus leucorhynchus</i>	✓		✓							✓	
39	Hooded Butcherbird	<i>Cracticus cassicus</i>				1							
40	Raja Ampat Pitohui	<i>Pitohui cerviniventris</i>				✓							
41	Willie Wagtail	<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>	✓			2		1	1				
42	Spangled Drongo	<i>Dicrurus bracteatus</i>		✓									
43	Papuan Crow	<i>Corvus orru</i>	✓										
44	Brown-headed Crow - N	<i>Corvus fuscicapillus</i>						✓	✓	✓			
45	Wilson's Bird-of-paradise - E	<i>Diphyllodes respublica</i>				1M							
46	Red Bird-of-paradise - E	<i>Paradisaea rubra</i>				1M							
47	Glossy Mantled Manocude	<i>Manocudia ater</i>				1							
48	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>					2	✓	✓		✓	✓	
49	Pacific Swallow	<i>Hirundo tahitica</i>	✓					✓		✓		✓	
50	Metallic Starling	<i>Aplonis metallica</i>							✓				
51	Singing Starling	<i>Aplonis cantoroides</i>			✓								
52	Moluccan Starling	<i>Aplonis mysolensis</i>							✓				
53	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	✓										
54	Yellow-faced Myna	<i>Mino dumontii</i>								✓			
55	New Guinea Friarbird	<i>Philemon buceroides</i>				✓							
56	Mimic Honeteater	<i>Meliphaga analoga</i>							✓				

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic I=Introduced			March 2020										
	Common name	Scientific name	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
57	Olive-backed Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris jugularis</i>		✓					✓				
58	Eurasian Tree Sparrow - I	<i>Passer montanus</i>	✓	✓									

## Mammals

			March 2020										
	Common name	Scientific name	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<b>Cetaceans</b>													
1	Pan-tropical Spotted Dolphin	<i>Stenella attenuata</i>		100+								100s	
2	Spinner Dolphin	<i>Stenella longirostris</i>		50+	✓				150+		✓	100s	
3	Indo-pacific Bottlenose Dolphin	<i>Tursiops aduncus</i>		5		✓	✓	✓					
4	Omura's Whale	<i>Balaenoptera omurai</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓		
5	Bryde's Whale	<i>Balaenoptera brydei</i>				?					✓	20	
6	Baleen Whale sp									3			
<b>Other Mammals</b>													
1	Fruit Bat sp	<i>Pteropodidae</i> sp										✓	

## Other species

	Common name	Scientific name	trip
<b>Fish</b>			
1	Whitetip Reef Shark	<i>Triaenodon obesus</i>	✓
2	Blacktip Reef Shark	<i>Carcharhinus melanopterus</i>	✓
3	Brown-banded Bamboo Shark	<i>Chiloscyllium punctatum</i>	✓
4	Tasselled Wobbegong	<i>Eucrossorhinus dasypogon</i>	✓
5	Blue-spotted Mask Ray (/Stingray)	<i>Neotrygon kuhlii</i>	✓
6	Blue-spotted Ribbon Ray	<i>Taeniura lymma</i>	✓
7	Reef Manta	<i>Manta alfredi</i>	✓
8	Ocean Manta	<i>Manta birostris</i>	✓

	Common name	Scientific name	trip
<b>Fish</b>			
9	White-tailed Stingray	<i>Himantura granulata</i>	✓
10	Indo-pacific Sailfish	<i>Istiophorus platypterus</i>	✓
11	Blue Marlin (?)	<i>Makaira nigricans</i>	✓
12	Panda Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon adiergastos</i>	✓
13	Eastern Triangular Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon baronessa</i>	✓
14	Saddled Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon ephippium</i>	✓
15	Lined Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon lineolatus</i>	✓
16	Redfin Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon lunulatus</i>	✓
17	Black-backed Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon melannotus</i>	✓
18	Spot-tail Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon ocellicaudus</i>	✓
19	Eight-banded Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon octofasciatus</i>	✓
20	Ornate Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon ornatissimus</i>	✓
21	Latticed Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon rafflesi</i>	✓
22	Oval-spot Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon speculum</i>	✓
23	Chevroned Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon trifascialis</i>	✓
24	Pacific Double-saddled Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon ulietensis</i>	✓
25	Teardrop Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon unimaculatus</i>	✓
26	Vagabond Butterflyfish	<i>Chaetodon vagabundus</i>	✓
27	Two-eyed Coralfish	<i>Coradion melanopus</i>	✓
28	Pyramid Butterflyfish	<i>Hemitaurichthys polylepis</i>	✓
29	Pennant Bannerfish	<i>Heniochus chrysostomus</i>	✓
30	Humphead Bannerfish	<i>Heniochus varius</i>	✓
31	Big Longnose Butterflyfish	<i>Forcipiger longirostris</i>	✓
32	Three-spot Angelfish	<i>Apolemichthys trimaculatus</i>	✓
33	Graytail Angelfish	<i>Chaetodontoplus poliourus</i>	✓
34	Bicolour Angelfish	<i>Centropyge bicolor</i>	✓
35	Emperor Angelfish	<i>Pomacanthus imperator</i>	✓
36	Blue-girdled Angelfish	<i>Pomacanthus navarchus</i>	✓
37	Sixbar Angelfish	<i>Pomacanthus sexfasciatus</i>	✓
38	Regal Angelfish	<i>Pygoplites diacanthus</i>	✓
39	Semi-circle Angelfish	<i>Pomacanthus semicirculatus</i>	✓



	Common name	Scientific name	trip
	<b>Fish</b>		
40	Vermiculated Angelfish	<i>Chaetodontoplus mesoleucus</i>	✓
41	Golden Spadefish	<i>Platax boersii</i>	✓
42	Striped Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus lineatus</i>	✓
43	Brushtail Tang	<i>Zebrasoma scopas</i>	✓
44	Pacific Sailfin Tang	<i>Zebrasoma velifer</i>	✓
45	White-freckled Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus macuiliceps</i>	✓
46	Whitecheek Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus nigricans</i>	✓
47	Fine-lined Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus grammoptilus</i>	✓
48	Ringtail Surgeonfish	<i>Acanthurus blochii</i>	✓
49	Bristletooth sp	<i>Ctenochaetus sp.</i>	✓
50	Sleek Unicornfish	<i>Naso hexacanthus</i>	✓
51	Whitemargin Unicornfish	<i>Naso annulatus</i>	✓
52	Orangespine Unicornfish	<i>Naso lituratus</i>	✓
53	Moorish Idol	<i>Zanclus cornutus</i>	✓
54	Foxface Rabbitfish	<i>Siganus vulpinus</i>	✓
55	Coral Rabbitfish	<i>Siganus corallinus</i>	✓
56	Blackeye Rabbitfish	<i>Siganus puelloides</i>	✓
57	Masked Rabbitfish	<i>Siganus puellus</i>	✓
58	Java Rabbitfish	<i>Siganus javus</i>	✓
59	Lined Rabbitfish	<i>Siganus lineatus</i>	✓
60	Scissortail Sergeant	<i>Abudefduf sexfasciatus</i>	✓
61	Indo-Pacific Sergeant	<i>Abudefduf vaigiensis</i>	✓
62	Orange Anemonefish	<i>Amphiprion sandaracinos</i>	✓
63	Pink Anemonefish	<i>Amphiprion perideraion</i>	✓
64	Clark's Anemonefish	<i>Amphiprion clarkii</i>	✓
65	Red & Black Anemonefish	<i>Amphiprion melanopus</i>	✓
66	False Clown Anemonefish	<i>Amphiprion ocellaris</i>	✓
67	Spine-cheeked Anemonefish	<i>Premnas biaculeatus</i>	✓
68	Saddleback Anemonefish	<i>Amphiprion polymnus</i>	✓
69	Green Chromis	<i>Chromis cinerascens</i>	✓
70	Javanese Damselfish	<i>Neoglyphidodon oxyodon</i>	✓
71	Blackvent Damsel	<i>Dischistodus melanotus</i>	✓
72	Reticulated Dascyllus	<i>Dascyllus reticulatus</i>	✓

	Common name	Scientific name	trip
	<b>Fish</b>		
73	Blackspot Snapper	<i>Lutjanus ehrenbergii</i>	✓
74	Two-spot Snapper	<i>Lutjanus biguttatus</i>	✓
75	One-spot Snapper	<i>Lutjanus monostigma</i>	✓
76	Red Snapper	<i>Lutjanus bohar</i>	✓
77	Checkered Snapper	<i>Lutjanus decussatus</i>	✓
78	Midnight Snapper	<i>Macolor macularis</i>	✓
79	Bridled Monocle Bream	<i>Scolopsis bilineata</i>	✓
80	Pearly Monocle Bream	<i>Scolopsis margaritifera</i>	✓
81	Longfin Emperor	<i>Lethrinus erythropterus</i>	✓
82	Orange-striped Emperor	<i>Lethrinus obsoletus</i>	✓
83	Bluefin Trevally	<i>Caranx melampygus</i>	✓
84	Orange-spotted Trevally	<i>Carangoides bajad</i>	✓
85	Bigeye Trevally	<i>Caranx sexfasciatus</i>	✓
86	Blackfin Barracuda	<i>Sphyraena qenie</i>	✓
87	Great Barracuda	<i>Sphyraena barracuda</i>	✓
88	Long-jawed Mackerel	<i>Rastrelliger kanagurta</i>	✓
89	Yellowfin Tuna	<i>Thunnus albacares</i>	✓
90	Banded Archerfish	<i>Toxotes jaculatrix</i>	✓
91	Redfin Flyingfish?	<i>Hirundichthys rufipinnis?</i>	✓
92	Reef Needlefish	<i>Strongylura incisa</i>	✓
93	Lunar Fusilier	<i>Caesio lunaris</i>	✓
94	Blue & Yellow Fusilier	<i>Caesio teres</i>	✓
95	Scissortail Fusilier	<i>Caesio caerulea</i>	✓
96	Narrowstripe Fusilier	<i>Pterocaesio tessellata</i>	✓
97	Yellowtail Fusilier	<i>Caesio cuning</i>	✓
98	Slender Grouper	<i>Anyperodon leucogrammicus</i>	✓
99	Peacock Grouper	<i>Cephalopholis argus</i>	✓
100	Bluespotted Grouper	<i>Cephalopholis cyanostigma</i>	✓
101	(Roving) Coral Grouper	<i>Cephalopholis miniata</i>	✓
102	Saddle Grouper	<i>Cephalopholis semaculata</i>	✓
103	Longfin Grouper	<i>Epinephelus quoyanus</i>	✓
104	Foursaddle Grouper	<i>Epinephelus spilotoceps</i>	✓
105	Honeycomb Grouper	<i>Epinephelus merra</i>	✓

	Common name	Scientific name	trip
	<b>Fish</b>		
106	Yellow-edged Lyretrail	<i>Variola louti</i>	✓
107	Freckled Hawkfish	<i>Paracirrhites forsteri</i>	✓
108	Diagonal Banded Sweetlips	<i>Plectorhinchus lineatus</i>	✓
109	Oriental Sweetlips	<i>Plectorhinchus vittatus</i>	✓
110	Ribbon Sweetlips	<i>Plectorhinchus ploytaenia</i>	✓
111	Giant Sweetlips	<i>Plectorhinchus albovittatus</i>	✓
112	Bumphead Parrotfish	<i>Bolbometopon muricatum</i>	✓
113	Bleeker's Parrotfish	<i>Chlorurus bleekeri</i>	✓
114	Roundhead Parrotfish	<i>Chlorurus strongylocephalus</i>	✓
115	Bower's Parrotfish	<i>Chlorurus bowersi</i>	✓
116	Darkcapped Parrotfish	<i>Scarus oviceps</i>	✓
117	Yellow-barred Parrotfish	<i>Scarus dimidiatus</i>	✓
118	Yellowbar Parrotfish	<i>Scarus schlegeli</i>	✓
119	Swarthy Parrotfish	<i>Scarus niger</i>	✓
120	Spotted Parrotfish	<i>Cetoscarus ocellatus</i>	✓
121	Yellowtail Coris	<i>Coris gaimard</i>	✓
122	Redbreasted Wrasse	<i>Cheilinus fasciatus</i>	✓
123	Napoleon Wrasse	<i>Cheilinus undulatus</i>	✓
124	Humphead Wrasse	<i>Cheilinus undulatus</i>	✓
125	Anchor Tuskfish	<i>Choerodon anchorago</i>	✓
126	Checkerboard Wrasse	<i>Halichoeres hortulanus</i>	✓
127	Bluestreak Cleaner Wrasse	<i>Labroides dimidiatus</i>	✓
128	Pacific Bird Wrasse	<i>Gomphosus varius</i>	✓
129	Blackeye Thicklip	<i>Hemigymnus melapterus</i>	✓
130	Barred Thicklip	<i>Hemigymnus fasciatus</i>	✓
131	Cigar Wrasse	<i>Cheilio inermis</i>	✓
132	Razorfish sp	<i>Iniistius sp</i>	✓
133	Crescent Wrasse	<i>Thalassoma lunare</i>	✓
134	Slingjaw Wrasse	<i>Epibulus insidiator</i>	✓

	Common name	Scientific name	trip
	<b>Fish</b>		
135	Ringtail Wrasse	<i>Oxycheilinus unifasciatus</i>	✓
136	Blotcheye Soldierfish	<i>Myripristis murdjan</i>	✓
137	Brick Soldierfish	<i>Myripristis amaena</i>	✓
138	Tailspot Squirrelfish	<i>Sargocentron caudimaculatum</i>	✓
139	Orbicular Cardinalfish	<i>Sphaeramia orbicularis</i>	✓
140	Pajama Cardinalfish	<i>Sphaeramia nematoptera</i>	✓
141	Reef Lizardfish	<i>Synodus variegatus</i>	✓
142	Cheek-streaked Goby	<i>Echinogobius hayashi</i>	✓
143	Red Lionfish	<i>Pterois volitans</i>	✓
144	Spotfin Lionfish	<i>Pterois antennata</i>	✓
145	Painted Scorpionfish	<i>Parascorpaena picta</i>	✓
146	Papuan Scorpionfish	<i>Scorpaenopsis papuensis</i>	✓
147	Tassled Scorpionfish	<i>Scorpaenopsis oxycephala</i>	✓
148	Crocodile Flathead	<i>Cymbacephalus beauforti</i>	✓
149	Spottedd Boxfish	<i>Ostracion meleagris</i>	✓
150	Yellow Boxfish	<i>Ostracion cubicus</i>	✓
151	Doublebar Goatfish	<i>Parupeneus crassilabris</i>	✓
152	Cornetfish	<i>Fistularia commersoni</i>	✓
153	Trumpetfish	<i>Aulostnus chinensis</i>	✓
154	Rigid Shrimpfish	<i>Centricus scutatus</i>	✓
155	Golden Sweeper	<i>Parapriacanthus ransonneti</i>	✓
156	Vanikoro Sweeper	<i>Pempheris vanicolensis</i>	✓
157	Titan Triggerfish	<i>Balistoides viridescens</i>	✓



	Common name	Scientific name	trip
	<b>Fish</b>		
158	Clown Triggerfish	<i>Balistoides conspicillum</i>	✓
159	Blue Triggerfish	<i>Pseudobalistes fuscus</i>	✓
160	Orange-lined Triggerfish	<i>Balistapus undulatus</i>	✓
161	Blackpatch Triggerfish	<i>Rhinecanthus verrucosus</i>	✓
162	Yellowmargin Triggerfish	<i>Pseudobalistes flavimarginatus</i>	✓
163	Pinktail Triggerfish	<i>Melichthys vidua</i>	✓
164	Redtooth Triggerfish	<i>Odonus niger</i>	✓
165	Wedgetail Triggerfish	<i>Rhinecanthus rectangulus</i>	✓
166	Scrawled Filefish	<i>Aluterus scriptus</i>	✓
167	Star Puffer	<i>Arothron stellatus</i>	✓
168	Map Puffer	<i>Arothron mappa</i>	✓
169	Blackspotted Puffer	<i>Arothron nigropunctatus</i>	✓
170	Porcupinefish	<i>Diodon hystrix</i>	✓
171	Dolphinfish (possible sighting)	<i>Coryphaena hippurus</i>	✓
172	Mushroom Coral Pipefish	<i>Siokunichthys nigrolineatus</i>	✓
173	Snowflake Moray	<i>Echidna nebulosa</i>	✓
174	Yellowmargin Moray	<i>Gymnothorax flavimarginatus</i>	✓
175	Giant Moray	<i>Gymnothorax javanicus</i>	✓
	<b>Other Marine Life</b>		
176	Hawksbill Turtle	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>	✓
177	Green Turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	✓
178	Leatherback Turtle	<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	✓
179	Painted Spiny Lobster	<i>Panulirus versicolor</i>	✓
180	Blue-spot Hermit Crab	<i>Dardanus guttatus</i>	✓
181	Peacock Mantis Shrimp	<i>Odontodactylus scyllarus</i>	✓
182	Boring Giant Clam	<i>Tridacna crocea</i>	✓
183	Crown-of-thorns Starfish	<i>Acanthaster planci</i>	✓
184	Blue Star	<i>Linckia laevigata</i>	✓
185	Pacific Star	<i>Fromia pacifica</i>	✓
186	Christmas Tree Worm	<i>Spirobranchus sp.</i>	✓

	Common name	Scientific name	trip
	<b>Fish</b>		
187	Pale Spaghetti Worm	<i>Terebellidae sp.</i>	✓
188	Banded Seasnake (Krait)	<i>Laticauda colubrina</i>	✓
189	Broadclub Cuttlefish	<i>Sepia latimanus</i>	✓
190	Robust Sea Cucumber	<i>Colochirus robustus</i>	✓
191	Yellow-spotted Sea Cucumber	<i>Bohadschia sp.</i>	✓
192	Robust Sea Squirt	<i>Atriolum robustum</i>	✓
193	Gold-mouth Sea Squirt	<i>Polycarpa aurata</i>	✓
194	Red Vase Sponge	<i>Clathria basilana cf.</i>	✓
195	Octopus sp.		✓
	<b>Nudibranchs</b>		
1		<i>Nemobrotha milleri</i>	✓
	<b>Other</b>		
1	Globe Skimmer Dragonfly	<i>Pantala flavescens</i>	✓