



The bizarre-looking Philippine Frogmouth. Check those eyes! (Dani Lopez-Velasco).

ULTIMATE PHILIPPINES

14 JANUARY – 4/10/17 FEBRUARY 2017

LEADER: DANI LOPEZ-VELASCO

This year's Birdquest "Ultimate Philippines" tour comprised of the main tour and two post-tour extensions, resulting in a five-week endemics bonanza. The first three weeks focused on the better-known islands of Luzon, Palawan and Mindanao, and here we had cracking views of some of those mind-blowing, world's must-see birds, including Philippine Eagle, Palawan Peacock-Pheasant, Wattled Broadbill and Azure-breasted Pitta, amongst many other endemics. The first extension took us to the central Visayas where exciting endemics such as the stunning Yellow-faced Flameback, the endangered Negros Striped Babbler or the recently described Cebu Hawk-Owl were seen well, and we finished with a trip to Mindoro and remote Northern Luzon, where Scarlet-collared Flowerpecker and Whiskered Pitta delighted us.

Our success rate with the endemics– the ones you come to the Philippines for– was overall very good, and highlights included no less than 14 species of owl recorded, including superb views of Luzon Scops Owl, 12 species of beautiful kingfishers, including Hombron’s (Blue-capped Wood) and Spotted Wood, 5 endemic racket-tails and 9 species of woodpeckers, including all 5 flamebacks. The once almost impossible Philippine Eagle-Owl showed brilliantly near Manila, odd looking Philippine and Palawan Frogmouths gave the best possible views, impressive Rufous and Writhed Hornbills (amongst 8 species of endemic hornbills) delighted us, and both Scale-feathered and Rough-crested (Red-c) Malkohas proved easy to see. A pair of Ashy Thrushes gave amazing views, and Celestial Monarch, getting very rare these days, was seen nicely as well. 14 species of flowerpeckers, including the rare Whiskered, a Birdquest lifer, were seen, as well as no less than 16 species of sunbirds, including the seldom seen Lina’s Sunbird, together with the 3 world’s rhabdornis (formerly placed in their own family and now considered to be “just” starlings), including the rare Grand Rhabdornis.



This Luzon Scops Owl gave, in the end, walk-away views at Mount Polis. (DLV)

Deforestation is a very serious issue in the Philippines. In no time and unless urgent conservation work takes place, some of these exciting endemics will go extinct, so it’s a bit of a privilege every time you get to see these endangered birds.

Our Philippines adventure began at Manila airport and we were soon heading off towards Subic Bay. We were supposed to do some birding at Candaba marshes in the afternoon, but traffic in the city was worse than usual, and by the time we got there, it was already dark! However, we in Birdquest don’t give up that easily, and with torches in the hand, we managed to find 2 Philippine Swamphens, our main target, feeding close to the path! Pleased with our successful and unexpected night birding, we carried on towards Subic Bay, where we would stay for the next two nights.

Several nightbird species occur in the Subic area, so our first of many forthcoming owling sessions took place early next morning. Just before dawn we enjoyed close up views of a Chocolate Boobook sitting on a telephone wire by the road, while Spotted Wood Kingfishers called from the forest. The rest of the day was spent birding the various sites at Subic, and it proved to be a productive morning. Raptors were in evidence, highlighted by a very vocal juvenile Philippine Hawk-Eagle, eventually joined by an adult, seen well in the scope after some diligent searching. This is a tricky species to see, so we were very pleased with this sighting. Overhead, Philippine Serpent Eagles and Brahminy Kites soared, while a pair of cute Philippine

Falconets showed nicely. Also in the same area we connected with the scarce Green Racket-tail, seen both in flight, showing its characteristic tail feathers, and briefly perched on a tree. A couple of noisy flocks of endemic Rufous Coucals were, as usual, unobliging, only giving brief views for some, while noisy Blue-naped Parrots were pleasantly common. Delightful Whiskered Treeswifts, Guaiberos giving their constant high-pitched calls, Luzon Hornbills, Balicassiaos –the endemic Philippine drongo-, Stripe-headed Rhabdornis and Bar-bellied and Blackish Cuckooshrikes were all logged as well. Woodpeckers seemed to be everywhere, with stunning White-bellied, Northern Sooty and Philippine Pygmy, as well Luzon Flameback – the latter a recent split from Greater Flameback - all performing for us. We didn't know yet, but this would eventually turn out to be our best-ever Philippines tour for woodpeckers, with all endemics seen. Rufous-crowned Bee-eaters were conspicuous on the wires (a split from Blue-throated), and Brown-breasted Kingfishers (split by some from White-throated) were commonly seen along the road. Other notable additions to our ever growing lists included a single Elegant Tit, a calling Arctic Warbler, some Ashy Minivets, the widespread Philippine Bulbul, many Coletos, a shy White-browed Shama singing its beautiful song, and some spectacular Rough-crested Malkohas – definitely a trip favourite!-. We also spent some time searching, in vain, for the rare White-fronted Tit at a regular stake out. In the afternoon we visited another patch of forest, but it was predictably quiet, although a pair of Luzon Flamebacks showed nicely, as did a trio of Green Imperial Pigeons, located by Sally, and a pair of Philippine Green Pigeons. We finished off the day with great views of Luzon Hawk-Owl and Great-eared Nightjar.

Before leaving Subic the next day we had time for some early morning birding. First, yet some more owling, which resulted in terrific views of Philippine Scops Owl. Afterwards we visited a particular spot in a nearby hill in search of the uncommon White-lore Oriole, and after a bit of searching we finally found a pair, which gave decent views. We then went to the usual White-fronted Tit spot, but in spite of two hours looking for it, we drew a blank. It was then time to sit back for the long drive north to Banaue, where we arrived in time for dinner.



Two owls from Subic. Chocolate Boobook and Philippine Scops Owl. (DLV)

We set off very early next morning, looking for the endemic Luzon Scops Owl in the montane forest above town. The weather was awful, with mist and rain, and predictably no owls were even heard. We would have to try again... After dawn, we started birding along the road, still under miserable conditions. However, we managed to find some mixed flocks, with Green-backed Whistler, Negros Leaf Warbler (split from Mountain Leaf Warbler), Blue-headed Fantail, Chestnut-faced Babbler, Turquoise Flycatcher, Sulphur-billed

Nuthatch and Mountain White-eye all on offer. Striking Little Pied Flycatchers flittered around, a pair of Luzon Sunbirds (split off from Metallic-winged) busily fed on roadside flowers, while stunning males of both Flame-crowned and Fire-breasted Flowerpeckers gave fantastic views. Luzon Bush Warblers were very common by voice, and one was eventually coaxed into view, while a Long-tailed Ground Warbler was typically more elusive, only glimpsed by some. Mountain Shrikes were seen several times along the road, but on the other hand Benguet Bush Warblers were very quiet this year, with only one bird heard in the distance in spite of intense playback at various regular spots. The mist was very thick in the upper reaches of the mountain, so there was no chance to scope the slopes for the rare Flame-breasted Fruit Dove. We had lunch at Bay-yo, overlooking the river, where a nice male Luzon Water Redstart was picked out, while an Eastern Buzzard soared overhead. Given there was no improvement in the weather, we decided to head back, stopping at the famous Banaue rice terraces. Here, we saw several Buff-banded Rails as well as a White-browed Crake and some White-breasted Waterhens and Common Moorhens, while admiring the impressive views. In the late afternoon we did some birding in the hotel garden, where we added Red-keeled Flowerpecker, Tawny Grassbird, Golden-bellied Gerygone, and a flock of Yellowish White-eyes. Before sunset we were back at our Luzon Scops Owl spot, but the weather was still very bad, with constant rain, and we drew a blank.



Blue-headed Fantail and the endemic subspecies of Red Crossbill. (DLV)

Another attempt at the scops owl left us empty-handed, and afterwards we set off for some more birding in the mountain. The weather was as poor as the previous day, which made things difficult. However, we did very well during the course of the morning, finding some good birds. A pair of Scale-feathered Malkohas posed nicely in the scope to everyone's delight, while a pair of adorable Mountain Tailorbirds obliged at length. A male Brown-headed Thrush was a good find, and nearby we watched in detail a good flock of Red Crossbills of the endemic *luzoniensis* subspecies, a rare bird here and perhaps a future split, which were also joined by a pair of cracking White-cheeked Bullfinches. Excellent! We then retraced our steps and after a picnic lunch, we continued our birding around the hotel, finding a good mixed flock. And before dusk we resumed our battle with the scops owl. After a half an hour hike we reached our best site, and waited. A surprise Philippine Eagle-Owl started calling in the distance, and after a while, the ghost scops owl called a couple of times. At one point, the bird flew in silently but unfortunately only the leader managed to see it in the spotlight, flying away before the rest could get on the bird. In spite of trying for some more time, the bird never came again. Fourth attempt, and the owl was still beating us, but there would still be a last assault...

So, after a few hours sleep, some intrepid members of the group decided to give one final try, and this time we succeeded, getting smashing views of the scops owl just a couple feet from us. Persistence pays off! We then went back to the hotel for breakfast, and afterwards left Banaue for the long drive back to Manila. A stop at the Lagawe river gave us the hoped-for Indigo-banded Kingfisher, well spotted by Frank, showing very well in the scope as it sat on some rocks by the river. The rest of the day was spent in the vehicle, until we

reached a well-known stake out for the rare Philippine Eagle-Owl not far from Manila. Here, it didn't take long before Colin spotted a cracking adult roosting in a tree. However, given we had time, we decided to wait until dusk for better views, and it was certainly worth it. We were treated to wonderful close-up views of no less than 3 birds, two adults and a fully-grown chick, which were admired at length. After this, we battled the terrible traffic of Manila and eventually arrived to our luxury hotel in the city.



Philippine Eagle-Owl. WOW! (DLV)

Our flight to Palawan left early next morning. The group arrived to Puerto Princesa and went straight birding to a nearby beach, where we quickly found our target, the endangered Chinese Egret. At least 3 birds were scoped as they fed in the mudflats, giving good comparisons with nearby Little Egrets. Other birds in the area included some Grey-tailed Tattlers and Pacific Golden Plovers, while the mangroves held several Philippine Pied Fantails. The rest of the morning and part of the afternoon was spent birding along the road to Sabang. The retiring Palawan Flycatcher gave excellent looks, and a pair of White-vented Shamans obliged. Palawan Drongo, Palawan Crow, Rufous-tailed Tailorbird, Yellow-throated Leafbird, Palawan Flowerpecker and Pale Spiderhunter were noted several times, while an adult White-bellied Sea Eagle was found perched in a distant tree. Our afternoon outing was pretty successful, scoring a rare Red-headed Flameback – split from Greater Flameback, and now endemic to Palawan-, which played hide and seek for a while until it was eventually seen by everybody, as well as a pair of the more common Spot-throated Flameback –split from Common Flameback-. At least 4 Red-vented Cockatoos were observed from a

vantage point, together with endemic Palawan Hornbill and Palawan Tits, while Common Iora, Dark-throated Oriole, Black-headed Bulbul, Plaintive Cuckoo and Square-tailed Drongo Cuckoo were also seen. In the evening we went for some owling, and it didn't disappoint. Within half an hour we had Palawan Scops Owl and Palawan Frogmouth fixed in the torch beam, just a few feet from us, and giving wonderful views. It was then time to go back to our excellent resort by the beach in Sabang.



A rather confiding Hooded Pitta at St Pauls, Palawan. (DLV)

In the early morning we took a boat to St Paul's National Park, seeing some Pacific Reef Herons on the way, and within minutes of arriving we had found our main target, the truly stunning Palawan Peacock-Pheasant, definitely a must-see bird in the world. This habituated individual is getting old and as soon as it dies, the species will return to its former highly sought-after and extremely elusive status. The same area also gave us two Philippine Megapodes, a very obliging Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher, a beautiful Asian Fairy Bluebird, a fly-by Stork-billed Kingfisher, a cracking and much appreciated Hooded Pitta and a variety of endemics including Palawan Blue Flycatcher, the aptly-named Lovely Sunbird, and Sulphur-bellied, Ashy-fronted and Palawan Bulbuls. In the afternoon we did some more roadside birding, which produced Common Hill Myna, further views of Red-headed Flameback, Chestnut-breasted Malkoha, Purple-throated Sunbird and Ashy-headed Babbler.

Our main target for the next day was the retiring and highly sought-after Falcated Wren-Babbler, endemic to Palawan. We spent considerable time chasing a vocal but very uncooperative bird down a very steep trail, but eventually we had to give up, as the bird wasn't to be seen. Meanwhile, a Blue Paradise Flycatcher circled us, giving good views, and some noisy Blue-headed Racquet-tails flew overhead, although unfortunately not everyone got on them. Afterwards we tried at another site for the wren-babbler, and fortunately this time we found a far more cooperative individual, even posing in the open for photos, resulting in the best views I've ever had of this shy and striking species. Excellent stuff! In the same area we also added Crested Honey Buzzard, Peregrine and Crested Serpent Eagle –all soaring together- to our list. After lunch, we drove towards Puerto Princesa, where we would be spending the next 2 nights. After checking in at our hotel, we went to the harbour, and then took a boat out to a small offshore island in search of Mantanani Scops Owl. As it got dark, the owls started calling, and we were soon treated to excellent views of one of these cute owls with strikingly white eyes. After a picnic dinner in the island, we took the boat back to the mainland and drove on to our hotel.



The two endemic nightbirds of Palawan. Palawan Scops Owl and Palawan Frogmouth. (DLV)

We spent most of the next day birding around the Iwahig Penal Colony. In the early morning we worked the Balsahan Trail, stopping on the way to see some Pink-necked Green Pigeons feeding in a fruiting tree, together with a few Eyebrowed Thrushes and an all too brief Fiery Minivet. Once in the forest, Melodious Babblers were pretty common by voice, but it took a while until everyone had satisfactory views. We found another cooperative Falcated Wren-Babbler here, as well as other forest species previously seen, such as Ashy-headed Babbler, Spot-throated Flameback and Blue Paradise Flycatcher, while an adult Crested Goshawk was found perched on a tree. A short stop at some rice paddies gave us good numbers of waders including Common, Pin-tailed/Swinhoe's Snipes (no photos showing outer tail feathers to confirm the ID), Pacific Golden Plover, Long-toed and Red-necked Stints, Wood Sandpiper, Redshank, Marsh Sandpiper and Common Greenshank, as well as flocks of Chestnut, White-bellied and Scaly-breasted Munias and some Eastern Grey Wagtails, Paddyfield Pipits and Zitting Cisticolas. After lunch, we went in search of Spotted Wood Owls in a forested area not far from town where they are known to roost, and after a bit of a search, Pete spotted one of the roosting birds, which was soon in the scope. What a great-looking owl! Pleased with our success, we then visited some nearby mangroves, which produced excellent views of Copper-throated Sunbirds, Mangrove Blue Flycatchers (of the endemic subspecies *philippinensis*, probably a separate species. Frank, time to split it!) and Olive-backed Sunbirds of the endemic *aurora* race.

Early next morning we took a flight to Manila and then to Cagayan de Oro on the island of Mindanao, where we stayed overnight.

Next morning, we drove to Bukidnon Province and the jumping off point for Mount Kitanglad. Eventually we arrived at the trailhead where the ponies were waiting to carry our baggage up to the camp. The track is no longer passable for vehicles, so we were back to the traditional sweaty walk up to the Eagle Camp. After settling in, we went outside for some initial exploration, which gave us Olive-capped Flowerpecker, Black-and-cinnamon Fantail, Sulphur-billed Nuthatch, Rufous-headed Tailorbird, Mountain White-eye, a pair of Fire-breasted Flowerpeckers, Grey-hooded Sunbird, Cinnamon Ibon and a rather confiding Long-tailed Ground Warbler –normally a very secretive bird-. What a great start! We set out again just before dusk to look for Bukidnon Woodcock – a species discovered by a Birdquest group lead by Simon Harrap and the late

Tim Fisher in 1993 - and the birds put on a great show, displaying over the clearing and giving excellent looks. A pair of Philippine Nightjars were seen flying around in the same area too. And just before dinner, we finished off the day with a Philippine Frogmouth at touching distance. What a bizarre-looking beast!



Apo Myna and McGregor's Cuckooshrike are two of Kitangland's specialities. (DLV)

We woke up early on our first full day in the mountain, in order to look for Giant Scops Owl. However, we only heard it distantly. After breakfast we walked up to the Eagle Viewpoint with our man-in-the-spot, Carlito, and his son Danny, picking up a few species on the way. By 8 o'clock half of the group had reached the viewpoint, where the plan was to spend most of the day, hoping for the great Philippine Eagle, the star of the mountain, and possibly of the whole country, to show up. We had chairs, drinks (including beer, yes!) and even a tarpaulin roof to protect us from the rain and sun, which made the wait rather comfortable. Diligent scanning produced several Crested Honey Buzzards of the endemic subspecies, Philippine Serpent Eagle and a group of Mindanao Racket-tails. And then, all of a sudden, a magnificent adult Philippine Eagle was spotted soaring low over the hill. We enjoyed terrific views of this truly impressive, massive raptor until it disappeared behind the trees. Excellent! However, by the time the rest of the group –which had seen Pinsker's Hawk-Eagle on their way up- arrived to the viewpoint, the eagle was nowhere to be seen. Those who had seen the eagle opted to go up to the Apo Sunbird area, while the others decided to stay at the viewpoint, hoping the eagle would reappear. So we set off, and proceeded to the higher parts of the mountain. Birding was overall good and we found a couple of mixed flocks. McGregor's Cuckooshrikes were fairly common and conspicuous, while a single Mindanao (Black-masked) White-eye showed briefly. Once we reached the right altitude, it took no more than a minute to find our target, the localized Apo Sunbird. A male was seen feeding very low down, giving excellent views, and right afterwards, our picnic lunch arrived in ponies. Now that was good timing...We then made it back to the viewpoint, where unfortunately the eagle hadn't shown up. It was then time to start heading down to the camp, although, by especial request, some of us opted to stay at the viewpoint overnight. The rest of the group had another great show by a pair of woodcocks, but again the "veteran" Giant Scops Owl by the camp was totally unresponsive to playback.



Mountain Shrike, endemic to the Philippines. (DLV)

After another unsuccessful go at the scops owl at dawn next morning, we walked up to the viewpoint again. We did very well on the way up, scoring Red-eared Parrotfinch, which gave excellent views, perched in a branch, and a cracking Yellow-breasted Fruit Dove, definitely one of the best fruit doves in the world. A pair of Buff-spotted Flamebacks was seen briefly as well. Once we reached the viewpoint, we found out the eagle still hadn't been seen by those brave enough to spend the night up there, although a Giant Scops Owl proved cooperative and gave excellent views the previous night. No Mindanao Scops Owls were heard though. All together now, we kept searching for the raptor. While doing so, we saw some close Stripe-breasted Rhabdornis and many punk-looking Apo Mynas. Pressure was definitely building-up, but then we were greeted by some major news. Carlito and Danny had miraculously found the Eagle sitting on a nest, incubating an egg, not far from where we were! Shocked by these great news, we followed our local guides, and we were soon having scope views of a cracking adult Philippine Eagle, both sitting in the nest and perched in a branch. Conditions for photography were not good, with branches on the way, but the views we had were terrific, and we could admire its massive blue bill and the impressive "mane", almost resembling a male lion, for as long as we wanted! We can only hope now the eagles do well and manage to raise their chick. All smiles now, we then walked back to the campsite, for a well-deserved mandy and a sumptuous dinner prepared by Nicky, whom, apart from a great local guide, is an excellent cook!

It rained all night long, and early next morning, after packing our bags, we said goodbye to our wonderful hosts, Carlito and his family, and walked to the village in pouring rain, where our vehicles were waiting for us. We then drove for the rest of the day towards Davao, and as soon as we reached our final destination, which was included in the itinerary of this tour for the first time, we set off in search for a very special bird. We had just enough light to find a responsive pair of Cryptic Flycatchers, a Birdquest lifer! Also in the same spot we had both a Southern Silvery and a Ruddy Kingfisher sitting on the same bamboo branch over the river.

After a good night's sleep, followed by another try for Giant Scops Owl, we went on a mission again. The rare Whiskered Flowerpecker, a mid-altitude Mindanao endemic, had only recently been found at a reliable and accessible place, so again for the first time in a Birdquest tour we would search for it. With the help of local birder Pete Simpson we reached the site after just a 30 min drive from the accommodation. And once there, it didn't take long before having a Whiskered Flowerpecker fixed in the scope. Second Birdquest lifer in 24 hours, hooray! We all enjoyed excellent scope views of the bird, and then went back for breakfast at the hotel. Afterwards, we travelled for a few hours towards Compostela Valley, where we were hoping to see the rare Lina's Sunbird at a newly discovered site by Pete. This is a species that has been seen by few birders, and that required a long hike in order to see it, so having a stake out just on the roadside was a welcome addition to the Birdquest itinerary. We had all necessary permits to visit this sensitive area, and we reached it with high expectations. It was very foggy at first, and no sunbirds could be located. Plan b meant several rides on Pete's 4WD vehicle, to take all of us to the upper reaches of the road, and this proved to be the right decision. As soon as we got out of the car, we found a cracking pair of Lina's Sunbirds feeding in

front of us, and we enjoyed point-blank views of these rare birds. Also in the area we recorded some McGregor's Cuckooshrikes, sounding very different to the ones in Kitangland, and heard a couple of Long-tailed Bush Warblers, which also call quite differently here and might well be split off in the near future. Other birds of note here included several Mindanao White-eyes and Olive-capped Flowerpeckers of the endemic subspecies. We then thanked Pete for all his help after such a successful morning, and continued towards Bislig, our base for the next four nights.



The seldom-seen Lina's Sunbird gave amazing views at Compostela Valley. (DLV)

Our first day in what remains of the PICOP logging concession was surely a very especial one, with a great selection of endemics, including one of the most difficult to get, seen very well. Our usual early start and bumpy jeepney ride into the former concession was in the dark, in order to do some nightbirding. However, the owls were not as cooperative as we would have hoped. We heard several Mindanao Hawk-Owls, but only one was seen briefly in flight, despite all of our efforts. We also heard a distant Giant Scops Owl and a couple of Philippine Frogmouths. After some instant coffee, interrupted by a calling Hombron's (Blue-capped Wood) Kingfisher, which gave brief views to some, and with the umbrellas in the hand, we started our birding. We would be spending most of the day along a trail through forested hills, at the best bit of habitat remaining in PICOP. Things started well, with Metallic-winged and Handome Sunbirds feeding on some flowers by the road and a pair of Philippine Orioles perched in a nearby tree. Overhead, a flock of Philippine Spine-tailed Swifts gave good views, while a Black-and-white Triller was scoped briefly. 15 minutes later I saw a splash of blue crossing the trail, and after a bit of playback, a stunning Azure-breasted Pitta (Steere's P) was coaxed into view, calling from an exposed branch. We admired this beauty for as long as we wanted, and had full-frame scope views. We continued our walk, punctuated by stops to watch a pair of retiring Rufous-tailed Jungle Flycatchers, a male Philippine Trogon, a pair of sneaky Striated Wren-Babblers, a soaring Pinsker's Hawk-Eagle, a single Philippine (Steere's) Honey Buzzard, a perched adult Philippine Serpent Eagle, and some Yellowish and Yellow-wattled Bulbuls feeding on a fruiting tree, alongside Coppersmith Barbets and Bicoloured Flowerpeckers. It took a while, but we eventually found a mixed flock, which gave us Philippine Leaf Warbler, Rufous Paradise Flycatcher –much better in the field than in the guide!-, Mindanao Blue Fantail, Yellow-bellied Whistler and restless Mindanao Pygmy Babblers, amongst others. And right after, Louis discovered the bird of the day, the highly sought-after and rare (Mindanao) Wattled Broadbill, a truly spectacular species that can be very hard to find. There was actually a small flock of 4 of these megas, and fortunately everyone in the group managed to get good views of them. The day was far from over though, and we still added several new birds to our list, including both Black-headed and Rufous-fronted Tailorbirds and Philippine Drongo-Cuckoo. In the afternoon we paid a visit to Bislig airfield, where we saw several interesting species, including Wandering Whistling Duck, some attractive Philippine Ducks both in flight and resting in a small pond, three King Quails flushed from the ground that then completely vanished, Yellow and Cinnamon Bitterns, many White-browed Crakes and a single Buff-banded

Rail, a brief Clamorous Reed Warbler, some skulking Middendorff's Grasshopper Warblers –very common by voice here, but always difficult to see!-, Eastern Yellow Wagtail, Paddyfield Pipit and a pair of Golden-headed Cisticolas. It had been a long but very productive day, so we wend bak to our hotel for dinner and some sleep.



Two of the rarest birds seen during our stay in PICOP. The cracking (Mindanao) Wattle-billed Woodpecker and the impressive Southern Sooty Woodpecker. (DLV)

Back on the jeepney again early next morning, we decided to try another area of PICOP. Owling was rather poor, but things improved rather quickly just as it got light. First, a Pink-bellied Imperial Pigeon in the scope, followed by a very rarely seen species, a trio of impressive Southern Sooty Woodpeckers –a lifer for the leader-, which obliged at length. And not long after, a magnificent Rufous Hornbill was seen flying over our heads, landing in a large tree, where the scope views were just brilliant. We spent some time chasing a calling Winchell's Kingfisher, but it proved fruitless. Meanwhile, we had our first looks at Blue-crowned Racket-tail, and then it was time to get inside the forest. A short trail here was very productive, encountering a large mixed flock as soon as we entered it. Activity was intense, and it wasn't easy to get on all the birds. Best bird here was definitely a beautiful male Celestial Monarch, a very uncommon species nowadays, that alerted us of its presence by its constant three-note call. Most of us managed to get good views of it, while other birds in the flock included Rufous Paradise Flycatcher, an all-too-brief Short-crested Monarch, Mindanao Blue Fantail, Brown Tit-Babbler, our first Rusty-crowned Babblers and Yellow-bellied Whistler, while a Naked-faced Spiderhunter was also found. We then tried for Little Slaty Flycatcher, to no avail.



Both Azure-breasted (Steere's) Pitta and Hombron's (Blue-capped Wood) Kingfishers obliged at PICOP. (DLV)

After such an exciting morning, we had our picnic lunch, which was interrupted by a Hombron's Kingfisher responding to Nicky's tape. In no time we had this cracker perched in a branch in the open, allowing for unbeatable views. Excellent stuff! A short afternoon walk in the forest was, predictably, rather quiet, with a heard-only Philippine Leafbird and a calling Short-crested Monarch high up in the canopy as the only things of note. Once we got back to the road, we heard the loud calls of Writhed Hornbills, and after struggling for a while, we finally managed to attract them closer for some excellent views. Also in the same area we had Mindanao Hornbill, so a three-hornbill day can't be a bad day at all! On the walk back to the jeepney a fast-moving mixed flock held another male Celestial Monarch, which was seen by some of us.

Dawn greeted us in another patch of forest, where a pair of Chocolate Boobooks obliged, and a Giant Scops Owl came briefly to the tape. A visit to a nearby clearing gave us a Blue-backed Parrot calling and flying around, and finally landing in a tree. This is a very rare species in the Philippines, and one that hadn't been seen by our local guide Zardo in the last few years! After watching it for a while, we continued our search for Winchell's Kingfisher. There were some birds calling, but frustratingly out of view, with only one seen in flight. And then, Nicky miraculously found a female perched in the canopy, which showed well in the scope. From the same spot we found "flowerpecker tree", which held no less than 5 species: a pair of Striped Flowerpeckers –new for us–, as well as Red-keeled, Orange-bellied, Bicoloured and Buzzing. A quick foray

into the forest gave us our first Amethyst Brown Dove of the trip, and further views of what must have been the same Southern Sooty Woodpeckers seen the day before, together with a brief Black-faced Coucal found by Andy. Then, back to the clearing, where we found a male Grey-throated Sunbird. And not long after, the heavens opened. Thankfully, we saw it coming, and were already at the jeepney when the downpour started. And it basically lasted for the whole day, making birding nearly impossible. While sheltering from the rain in the vehicle, an entertaining mystery song –but no, not bird song!- took place to kill some time. After lunch, and given it was still raining hard, we went back to Bislig, stopping to admire the faithful and always brilliant Southern Silvery Kingfisher on its pool. After a short break at the hotel, we returned to Bislig airfield, hoping for the uncommon Australasian Grass Owl to show up. And oh boy did it show... At 5:30 the bird started to haunt, still in broad daylight, and put on a fantastic show.



This Australasian Grass Owl put on a fantastic show hunting over Bislig airfield. (Louis Bevier)

After a day of travelling we finally made it to our accommodation in the base of Mount Makiling in the early evening.

The next day was spent up in Makiling, where unfortunately, due to rain and strong winds, the birding was rather poor. Spotted Wood Kingfishers, one of the key birds of the mountain, were very quiet during our visit, but in the end we finally connected with a perched bird, seen exceedingly well in the scope. A true stunner! Grey-backed Tailorbirds weren't very responsive either, but at the second attempt we obtained good looks at a one, which even sat still for a while. We only came across a small mixed flock, which held previously seen species, including Black-and-cinnamon Fantail and Philippine Pygmy Woodpecker. On the walk back we enjoyed good looks at a male Philippine Trogon, as well as a brief Pechora Pipit, but that was pretty much it. Before lunch we visited the botanical gardens, where Flaming Sunbird was heard only before heavy rain started. Later in the afternoon we went to the "buttonquail track". Our target here, the endemic Spotted Buttonquail, was soon in the bag, with a pair crossing at close range a couple of times. Other things of note here included a large flock of Ashy Minivets, a pair of Barred Rails, some Asian Palm Swifts, a pair of Striated Swallows and a Stripe-headed Rhabdornis.



A female Spotted Wood Kingfisher. There was no shortage of kingfishers on this tour! (DLV)

Next morning we visited La Mesa Ecopark, in search of the endemic Ashy Thrush. The place was full of students, but after some time we found a quiet patch of forest, where a pair of these beautiful thrushes performed at length. What a bird! Just a few years ago this was one of the trickiest endemics to see, and within a few years, thanks to these birds in La Mesa the species has become available to everyone. Other goodies in the area included some Lowland White-eyes, a Grey-backed Tailorbird, a Grey-throated Sunbird and a female Spotted Wood Kingfisher. All that remained now was our drive back to Manila before we split up. Some would fly home, while the rest, plus two new participants, would now fly to Negros for the first extension of the tour. After saying goodbye to those leaving, we checked in for the flight to Dumagete and the Visayas Extension, arriving in good time at our seaside hotel in Negros. We left our bags, and went straight to our owling site. Here, it didn't take long to find our target, the cute Negros Scops Owl. After a sumptuous dinner –the norm on this tour!- we went to bed.

One of the most special Negros endemics is the endangered Negros Striped Babbler, and a hike up one of the few forested mountains left in the island is required in order to see it. The excursion turned out to be a great success, and even though it was quite a steep hike, it was well worth it, as we had excellent views of two pairs of these babblers. Other birds of note here included Lemon-throated Leaf Warbler and Philippine Tailorbird. After lunch we went in search of the very localized Visayan Shama (split from White-browed). Things turned out to be more difficult than expected, as our vans couldn't reach the site, due to the road being in poor conditions. One of our drivers was so concerned by some scratch happening to his van that he almost left us there and nearly drove back! We were not that far to the spot, so it was time for plan b. Motorbikes! After a bit of negotiation, we managed to find enough motorbikes to take everyone up to the shama area, and it then took us only 10 minutes to reach it. Good that everyone in the group was so open-minded, as it's sometimes necessary to be flexible when looking for alternatives in such occasions. And once at the forest, we soon heard the shama, and in no time Louis found it perched in a low branch. The bird stayed there for ages, and we had terrific views of this great songster. Mission accomplished! We then returned to the vehicles, and arrived to our hotel just in time for dinner!

Next morning, we paid a visit to the Twin Lakes to search for a few more endemics. On arrival we found a colourful male Maroon-naped Sunbird (a split from Flaming) as well as a male of the aptly named Magnificent Sunbird (a split from Crimson) feeding on some flowers. Then, 30 minutes of scanning from the veranda were as productive as ever, adding several new birds to our ever growing lists: Visayan Hornbills, White-winged Cuckooshrikes, Visayan Bulbuls and Visayan Drongos (the white bellied form of Balicassiao), all appeared in quick succession, giving great views. The weather was excellent – something unusual here-

and we decided to make the most of it, going on a very enjoyable boat trip around the lake, to look for the rare Yellow-faced Flameback. This turned out to be a great success, as we enjoyed terrific views of this truly spectacular woodpecker, which must rank amongst the best in the world. This was only the second time this endemic woodpecker was seen in a Birdquest tour, so we were all (especially the leader!) very excited with the sighting. Other good birds seen during the boat ride included a displaying Philippine Honey-Buzzard, which put on a fantastic show, as well as Western Osprey, Philippine Spine-tailed Swift and Striated Herons. We then returned to dry land, and spent some time in a viewing deck, overlooking the two lakes. After lunch, we still had some work to do. After a bit of walking in the forest we eventually found a mixed flock, which held our target Visayan Fantail, as well as a White-vented Whistler, amongst others. And, to round off the day, a visit to a clearing not far from the roadside produced excellent looks at a pair of Black-belted Flowerpeckers.



The stonking Yellow-faced Flameback and a cute Negros Scops Owl. (DLV)

We had surely done very well during our 2 days on Negros, but still had to look for Flame-templed Babbler, which for some reason have become difficult in the last few years. First, we tried at a new site, where nothing happened. Then we drove to another spot, and after a steep walk down the slope we reached a promising area. Here, we heard a babbler singing its distinctive song, which unfortunately only gave brief views to the leader. We waited in the same area for 2 more hours, hoping that the flock the bird was with would reappear, to no avail. It was then time to return to our hotel, pick up our luggage and headed to Bohol. The fast ferry took us to Tagbilaran in just two hours, but the seas were pretty much birdless.



The endangered Negros Striped Babbler. (DLV)

We had an early start next day and headed towards Rajah Sikatuna National Park. First, we spent some time at the headquarters clearing. While watching our first Samar Hornbills flying around we heard Nicky shouting at us, so we raced towards him, to find out he had just found a pair of Visayan Wattled Broadbills in the forest edge. They were in a mixed flock, but as it is usually the case with this bird, they were moving fast, and unfortunately only a couple of us managed to see one of them before they were out of sight. Afterwards we hit the trails, where after some effort we saw more or less all of our remaining targets, although the broadbills were not seen again. A pair of Buff-spotted Flamebacks showed nicely, and the usually skulking Yellow-breasted Tailorbird was seen very well out in the open. A single Visayan Blue Fantail –which in my experience has become much rarer here in recent years- calling high up in the canopy eventually came low enough to be seen pretty well, and we also managed to coax into view a very cooperative Striated Wren-Babbler. Mixed flocks held some Black-crowned Babblers together with Philippine Leaf Warbler, Brown Tit-Babbler and Mindanao Drongos, amongst others, while two Everett’s Scops Owls were found roosting in a cave. A roosting Colugo was much appreciated, and Sally even saw two of them flying from tree to tree. Before lunch we went to a nearby river, where our target, the stunning Northern Silvery Kingfisher, was soon found, posing nicely in the scope. In the afternoon we went to another site where our target, the endemic Bohol Sunbird (split from Metallic-winged) was found feeding on coconut flowers and allowing for excellent scope views. We spent the rest of the afternoon walking along a quiet road, where Black-faced Coucals obliged. Both Amethyst Brown Dove and Rusty-breasted Cuckoo were also noted, and the scope views of a pair of Samar Hornbills were most welcome.

We went back to the National Park early next morning, but things were very quiet. A short vigil from the clearing gave us a Philippine Minivet, found by Louis, as well as a perched Besra. Later, we did a couple of trails, finding some previously-seen species, and we improved our views of Buff-spotted Flameback and Black-crowned Babbler. We then went back to our accommodation, packed our bags, and left to the harbour. Our ferry to Cebu left on time and after docking we were on our way to Tabunan, a relict area of forest high in the hills above the Cebu City. We arrived in good time and walked out to the forest, where our main target, the recently described Cebu Hawk-Owl, hopefully awaited us. And as dusk fell, we stroke gold, enjoying walk away views of a pair of these owls, which flew in just 10 seconds after playing the tape. Now those were responsive owls!

We paid a brief visit to Tabunan again the next morning. Our first Black Shama- a scarce and retiring Cebu endemic- proved, for this species standards, relatively easy to see, and we all had good looks at it. Given we had two hours left, we decided to continue our birding in the forest. This is the place where the almost extinct (or possibly already extinct?) Cebu Flowerpecker used to occur, but there haven’t been any verified sightings in the last decade, so not seeing it didn’t really feel like a miss (although one always hopes for the

best when coming here!). We spent some time up in the “flowerpecker platform”, where of course nothing happened. However, in the vicinity we found a couple of sneaky Streak-breasted Bulbuls, which were only recently rediscovered in Cebu. Another Black Shama gave good views, and then it was time to say goodbye to Oking and Hazel, our local guides, and drive back to the city. The flight to Manila went smoothly, and we enjoyed a good night’s sleep.



A Philippine Honey Buzzard soaring over the Twin Lakes, Negros. (DLV)

Our flight to Mindoro left very, very early, but we weren’t to complain, as this would give us extra time to look for the specialities. As soon as we arrived we went straight to the main birding spot in the island: Sablayan Penal Colony. Things were relatively quiet, but we found a very cooperative Scarlet-collared Flowerpecker, our first Mindoro Bulbuls, Philippine Coucal of the endemic, all black, *mindorensis* race, and a brief Mindoro Hornbill. We had lunch by the lake, where some Philippine Ducks and Brown-breasted and Common Kingfishers entertained us, and after a short rest we paid a visit to a new forest site nearby. The place was alive with birds, and we enjoyed a great late afternoon birding. Mindoro Racket-tails showed nicely a couple of times, together with some more Mindoro Hornbills and Blue-naped Parrots, good numbers of Blue-tailed and Rufous-crowned Bee-eaters flew around us and a few Green Imperial and Philippine Green Pigeons were scoped. Once it got dark our target, Mindoro Hawk-Owl, uttering some of the most bizarre vocalizations of any owl species, performed, giving great views, in spite of the full moon (when owls don’t usually perch in the canopy :) -.

We returned to the same forest clearing early next morning, where bird activity was excellent for the first two hours. Pigeons were pleasantly common, and we had terrific views of a perched Pink-bellied Imperial Pigeon, as well as a couple of rare Metallic Pigeons. A pair of Black-and-white Trillers, a catch-up species for most, was a good find, and a cracking Changeable Hawk-Eagle gave great scope views. We then tried a promising looking trail that went into the forest, hoping to find the retiring Black-hooded (or Steere’s) Coucal, our last possible endemic –not counting the bleeding-heart, of course-. It took time, and when we were about to give up, a coucal flew in and gave excellent views, by far my best ever, out in the open. Excellent! After such a successful morning, we returned back to the car, seeing no less than 7 Philippine Serpent Eagles flying together. After lunch we went to our beach hotel in San José, where we spent a very enjoyable afternoon relaxing, drinking, and even partying!

Next day, we took a flight back to Manila and on to Tuguegerao, where we spent the night, before embarking on our trek to Sawa camp, deep into the Sierra Madre Mountains. A late driver and then a broken down vehicle delayed our start, but eventually we were on our way. The walk was pretty long but everyone did very

well. A few good birds were also seen, including Luzon Striped Babbler, Furtive Flycatcher and Sierra Madre Crow. We eventually waded across a river and made our way up to the camp, arriving by mid afternoon. Luckily, our crew had done an amazing job, everything was in place when we arrived, with plenty of beer and cold drinks already on the table!



Southern, left, and Northern, right, Silvery Kingfishers. Two of the best ones in the world, for sure. (DLV)

Due to a problem with the flights, we only had 1 day and a half to explore the mountain (a day less than usual), and I was a bit shocked by the state of the forest, compared to the last time I had been there. A big typhoon had hit the mountain some months ago, and as a result, large numbers of ancient trees had fallen down. The main trail we used for our birding here had totally disappeared, and most of the understory vegetation had been burnt by a lightning fire. And, to make things even more difficult, the weather during our stay was truly awful, with a lot of rain, and deep mud all over the place... We really had to work hard for the birds, but eventually succeeded with most of the targets. The main reason for coming to this remote area is the gorgeous Whiskered Pitta, a large, rare and colourful pitta endemic to the island of Luzon. This species is never easy, but the chances of seeing one here are pretty good, so our hopes were high. However, for some reason the species was strangely silent and elusive this year. After several hours, we finally heard a distant individual, but although we did our best, leaving the trail and walking down a very steep slope, the bird wasn't very responsive and couldn't be lured into view. We carried on, and fortunately heard another one. This time, the bird proved more obliging, and ultimately even had scope views of this soaking wet individual, sitting on a branch. Mission accomplished! The rest of the day, and the following morning, was spent trying to find the other specialities under the rain, and we were rewarded with good views of the seldom seen Grand Rhabdornis, while several Cream-breasted Fruit Doves feeding on a fruiting tree showed exceedingly well. Other good birds included Red Junglefowl, White-lored Oriole, Philippine Fairy Bluebird, Yellow-breasted Fruit Dove and Citrine Canary-Flycatcher. We tried hard for Sierra Madre Ground Warbler and Luzon Bleeding-heart, but ended up hearing the former and flushing from the tail the latter.

And then it was time to head back to civilization. We finally reached the road by mid afternoon, covered in mud, and headed for the hotel. A pleasant dinner and a few beers followed and we could then relax and begin to think back of everything we had seen during the previous 5 epic weeks.



Cream-bellied Fruit Dove sheltering from the rain in Sawa. (DLV)

All that remained was our flight back to Manila before we split up and headed for our separate flights home. It had been a very successful trip from a birding perspective, with many great birds. It is surprising that, even though the habitat continues to get more and more degraded each year, we still manage to see as many species as in the past, including a number of previously “ungettable” birds. However, it’s also true that the numbers of certain species are clearly decreasing rapidly, and some of them are getting tougher and tougher to find each year. The habitat destruction is becoming such a problem that the number of species we’ll be able to find in the future will soon start to diminish. So, the sad message is, if you’ve not yet been, go as soon as you can, as many of the birds will not be around too much longer, at least not in areas where we can get to them.



Birdquesters about to start the hike to Sawa.



Mangrove Blue Flycatcher and Rufous-tailed Tailorbird. (DLV)





Close-up of the retiring Falcatid Wren-Babbler and Ashy Thrush. (Nicky Icarangal and DLV)





Negros Striped Babbler and a pair of Mangrove Blue Flycatchers. (DLV)





Palawan Peacock-Pheasant and Mountail Tailorbird. (DLV)



SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **IOC World Bird Names**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>.

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

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

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

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

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

CR = Critically Endangered, **E** = Endangered, **V** = Vulnerable, **NT** = Near Threatened, **DD** = Data Deficient.

Wandering Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna arcuata* Seen at Candaba and Bislig (nominate).

Philippine Duck ◊ *Anas luzonica* (**VU**) Seen at Bislig and Mindoro.

Philippine Megapode ◊ (**Tabon Scrubfowl**) *Megapodius cumingii* Good views in St Paul's NP (nominate).

King Quail ◊ *Excalfactoria chinensis* Seen well at Bislig Airstrip (*lineata*).

Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus* Wild one at Sawa.

Palawan Peacock-Pheasant ◊ *Polyplectron napoleonis* (**VU**) Great views of the habituated male in St Paul's NP.

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* A few seen.



Philippine Duck and Bukidnon Woodcock. (DLV)

Cinnamon Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* A few seen.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* Good numbers seen at Candaba Swamp (nominate).

Striated Heron *Butorides striata* A couple seen (*atricapilla*-group).

Javan Pond Heron *Ardeola speciosa* Seen at Bislig.

Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* Common and widespread.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Several seen (*jouyi*).

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* Good numbers seen (*manilensis*).

Eastern Great Egret *Ardea [alba] modesta* Widespread. Not yet split by the IOC, which includes it in Great Egret.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia* Widespread (nominate).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Common and widespread (*nigripes*).

Pacific Reef Heron *Egretta sacra* Several seen at Palawan (nominate).

Chinese Egret ◊ *Egretta eulophotes* (**VU**) Good views near to Puerto Princesa.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* Seen on the way to Sawa.

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* One sighting (nominate).

Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* A few sightings (*philippensis*).

Philippine Honey Buzzard ◊ (Steere's H B) *Pernis steerei* Seen at PICOP and Negros.
Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* Seen in Mindanao (*hypoleucus*).
Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* Widespread (*intermedius*).
White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* Seen at Palawan.
Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela* Seen very well in Palawan (*palawanensis*).



Philippine Serpent Eagle. (DLV)

Philippine Serpent Eagle ◊ *Spilornis holospilus* Singles and pairs seen throughout the tour.
Eastern Marsh Harrier *Circus spilonotus* One sighting.
Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus* Scattered sightings.
Besra *Accipiter virgatus* A few sightings.
Eastern Buzzard *Buteo japonicus* Seen at Mt Polis.
Grey-faced Buzzard *Butastur indicus* Several seen.
Philippine Eagle ◊ *Pithecophaga jefferyi* (CR) Excellent views, both in flight and perched, at Kitangland.
Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus cirrhatus* Seen very well in Mindoro.
Pinsker's Hawk-Eagle ◊ *Nisaetus pinskeri* (VU) Seen well at PICOP and Kitangland.
Philippine Hawk-Eagle ◊ *Nisaetus philippensis* Terrific views of an adult and a juvenile at Subic.
Rufous-bellied Hawk-Eagle *Lophotriorchis kienerii* Seen well at Subic and Kitangland.
Barred Rail ◊ *Gallirallus torquatus* Various sightings (nominate).
Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis* Several seen (nominate).
Plain Bush-Hen ◊ *Amaurornis olivacea* A couple of brief sightings.
White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* Widespread (nominate).
White-browed Crake *Porzana cinerea* Seen well.
Philippine Swampfen ◊ *Porphyrio pulverulentus* Seen at Candaba.
Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* A few seen (*orientalis*).
Spotted Buttonquail ◊ *Turnix ocellatus* Good scope views of two birds at Mt Makiling (nominate).
Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Common in the paddies at Iwahig.
Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* Several.
Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* First seen in the paddies at Iwahig, Palawan (*curonicus*).
Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* One seen.
Bukidnon Woodcock ◊ *Scolopax bukidnonensis* Up to 3 showed very well at dusk in Mt Kitangland.
Pin-tailed/Swinhoe's Snipe *Gallinago stenura/megala* A few seen, but no outer tail feathers photographed.
Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* Good numbers in the paddies at Iwahig (nominate).
Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* 3 seen at Iwahig.



Yellow-breasted Fruit Dove, Amethyst Brown Dove and Pink-bellied Imperial Pigeon. (DLV)

- Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis* Good numbers seen in the paddies at Iwahig, Palawan.
- Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* Common.
- Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* Common in Palawan.
- Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* Seen at Palawan.
- Grey-tailed Tattler** *Tringa brevipes* A few seen well at White Beach.
- Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* A few scattered sightings during the tour.
- Long-toed Stint** *Calidris subminuta* Around 30 in the paddies at Iwahig, Palawan.
- Red-necked Stint** *Calidris ruficollis* Seen at Iwahig.
- Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* Several seen.
- Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo* Many off Negros.
- Greater Crested Tern** *Thalasseus bergii* Two off Negros.
- Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybrida* Lots at Candaba, on the journey to Banaue.
- Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia* 'feral' Introduced birds seen throughout the tour.
- Metallic Pigeon** *Columba vitiensis* Two seen well in Mindoro.
- Red Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia tranquebarica* Scattered sightings (*humilis*).
- Spotted Dove** *Spilopelia chinensis* Widespread.



Black-hooded Coucal, a skulking Mindoro endemic that was seen exceedingly well this year. (DLV)

- Philippine Cuckoo-Dove** ◊ *Macropygia* Seen several times.
- Common Emerald Dove** *Chalcophaps indica* One seen (nominate).
- Zebra Dove** *Geopelia striata* Fairly common and widespread, even around Manila.
- Luzon Bleeding-heart** ◊ *Gallinolumba luzonica* (NT) (LO) One at Sawa, flushed from the trail.
- White-eared Brown Dove** ◊ *Phapitreron leucotis* Nominate (Luzon) and *brevirostris* (Mindanao).
- Amethyst Brown Dove** ◊ *Phapitreron amethystinus* Seen well in PICOP and Bohol.
- Pink-necked Green Pigeon** *Treron vernans* Seen at Palawan.
- Philippine Green Pigeon** ◊ *Treron axillaris* Two forms; nominate (Subic on Luzon) and *canescens* (Mindanao).
- Thick-billed Green Pigeon** *Treron curvirostra* One seen.
- Cream-breasted Fruit Dove** ◊ *Ptilinopus merrilli* Great views at Sawa.
- Yellow-breasted Fruit Dove** ◊ *Ptilinopus occipitalis* Seen very well at PICOP and Sawa.
- Black-chinned Fruit Dove** ◊ *Ptilinopus leclancheri* First seen at Palawan.
- Pink-bellied Imperial Pigeon** ◊ *Ducula poliocephala* (NT) Seen at PICOP and Mindoro.
- Green Imperial Pigeon** *Ducula aenea* Common at Subic (nominate) and on Palawan; also at PICOP.
- Rufous Coucal** ◊ *Centropus unirufus* (NT) Brief views for some at Subic Bay.
- Black-faced Coucal** ◊ *Centropus melanops* Seen at PICOP and Bohol.
- Black-hooded Coucal** ◊ *Centropus steeri* Great views of one in Mindoro.
- Greater Coucal** *Centropus sinensis* Seen in Palawan.
- Philippine Coucal** ◊ *Centropus viridis* Seen a few times.
- Lesser Coucal** *Centropus bengalensis* One seen.
- Chestnut-breasted Malkoha** *Phaenicophaeus curvirostris* Seen in Palawan (*harringtoni*).
- Rough-crested Malkoha (Red-c M)** ◊ *Dasylophus superciliosus* Seen at Subic Bay and Mt Makiling (nominate).
- Scale-feathered Malkoha** ◊ *Dasylophus cumingi* Seen at Subic, Mt Polis and Mt Makiling.
- Asian Koel** *Eudynamis scolopaceus* Seen in Mindoro.
- Violet Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus* (H) Heard a couple of times.
- Plaintive Cuckoo** *Cacomantis merulinus* Scattered sightings.
- Rusty-breasted Cuckoo** *Cacomantis sepulcralis* Seen well several times (nominate).
- Philippine Drongo-Cuckoo** ◊ *Surniculus velutinus* The nominate form was seen well at PICOP.
- Square-tailed Drongo-Cuckoo** *Surniculus lugubris* Seen well in Palawan (*brachyurus*).
- Philippine Hawk-Cuckoo** ◊ *Hierococcyx pectoralis* (H) Heard at Kitangland.
- Eastern Grass Owl** *Tyto longimembris* Amazing views at Bislig.



Mantanani Scops Owl. (DLV)

- Giant Scops Owl** ♦ *Otus gurneyi* (VU) Seen by some in Kitangland and PICOP.
Palawan Scops Owl ♦ *Otus fuliginosus* (NT) Excellent views in Palawan.
Philippine Scops Owl ♦ *Otus megalotis* Seen well at Subic.
Everett's Scops Owl ♦ *Otus everetti* Seen in Bohol.
Negros Scops Owl ♦ *Otus nigrorum* Great views on Negros.
Luzon Scops Owl ♦ *Otus longicornis* (NT) Seen very well at Polis.
Mantanani Scops Owl ♦ *Otus mantananensis* (NT) Excellent views on a small offshore islet (nominate).
Philippine Eagle Owl ♦ *Bubo philippensis* Great views near Manila.
Spotted Wood Owl *Strix seloputo* Seen in Palawan.
Chocolate Boobook ♦ *Ninox randi* Great views at Subic Bay.
Luzon Hawk-Owl ♦ *Ninox philippensis* Seen well at Subic.
Mindanao Hawk-Owl ♦ *Ninox spilocephala* Poor flight views in PICOP.
Cebu Hawk-Owl ♦ *Ninox rumseyi* Great views in Cebu.



Mindoro Hawk-Owl, Cebu Hawk-Owl and Spotted Wood Owl. (DLV)

- Mindoro Hawk-Owl** ◊ *Ninox mindorensis* Seen in Mindoro.
- Philippine Frogmouth** ◊ *Batrachostomus septimus* Brilliant views at Mt Kitanglad (nominate).
- Palawan Frogmouth** ◊ *Batrachostomus chaseni* Great views near Sabang.
- Great Eared Nightjar** *Lyncornis macrotis* Seen at Subic, PICOP and Kitanglad. (nominate).
- Savanna Nightjar** *Caprimulgus affinis* (H) Heard at Angano.
- Philippine Nightjar** ◊ *Caprimulgus manillensis* Seen at Angano, Bislig, PICOP and Mt Kitanglad.
- Whiskered Treeswift** *Hemiprocne comata* Seen well at Subic Bay and Mt Kitanglad (*major*).
- Glossy Swiftlet** *Collocalia esculenta* Common.
- Grey-rumped Swiftlet** ◊ *Collocalia [esculenta] marginata* Common in Subic. Not universally split.
- Pygmy Swiftlet** ◊ *Collocalia troglodytes* First seen at Lagawe, with many at PICOP.
- Philippine Swiftlet** ◊ *Aerodramus mearnsi* Birds assumed to be this species at Mt Kitanglad.
- Ameline Swiftlet** ◊ *Aerodramus amelis* Widespread, absent from Palawan. Recently split from Uniform Swiftlet.
- Palawan Swiftlet** ◊ *Aerodramus [vanikorensis] palawanensis* Seen at Palawan. Not universally split.
- Philippine Spine-tailed Swift (P Needletail)** ◊ *Mearnsia picina* (NT) Good views at PICOP.

Purple Needletail ◊ *Hirundapus celebensis* Seen in Mindor



Rufous Hornbill, above, and Writhed Hornbill, below, at PICOP. (DLV)

House Swift *Apus nipalensis* Seen at the Banaue Hotel (nominate).

Asian Palm Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis* Seen twice.

Philippine Trogon ◊ *Harpactes ardens herberti* Seen well at PICOP and Makiling.

Oriental Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis* Scattered sightings (nominate).

Spotted Wood Kingfisher ◊ *Actenoides lindsayi* Seen very well at Mt Makiling (nominate).

Hombron's Kingfisher (Blue-capped K) ◊ *Actenoides hombroni* (VU) Good views at PICOP.

Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis* Seen at St Pauls (*gouldi*).

Ruddy Kingfisher *Halcyon coromanda* Seen well in Davao.

Brown-breasted Kingfisher ◊ *Halcyon gularis* Several seen, the first at Subic Bay. Not yet split by the IOC.

Winchell's Kingfisher ◊ (Rufous-lored K) *Todiramphus winchelli* Good views at PICOP (*mindanensis*)

Collared Kingfisher *Todiramphus chloris* Widespread. First seen at Subic Bay (*collaris*).

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* Scattered sightings (*bengalensis*).

Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher *Ceyx erithaca* See in Palawan. See note.

Indigo-banded Kingfisher ◊ *Ceyx cyanopectus* 1 on the river at Lagawe (nominate).

Southern Silvery Kingfisher ◊ *Ceyx argentatus* (VU) Great views on a small pond at PICOP.

Northern Silvery Kingfisher ◊ *Ceyx flumenicola* Excellent views in Bohol.

Blue-tailed Bee-eater ◊ *Merops philippinus* Seen in Mindoro (nominate).

Rufous-crowned Bee-eater ◊ *Merops americanus* Scattered sightings.

Palawan Hornbill ◊ *Anthracceros marcheii* (VU) Several showed very well in Palawan.



Crested Honey Buzzard of the endemic *philippensis* subspecies, and a record shot of THE eagle: Philippine Eagle. (DLV)

- Rufous Hornbill** ◇ *Buceros hydrocorax* Good views at PICOP (*mindanensis*).
- Luzon Hornbill** ◇ *Penelopides manillae* A few seen at Subic Bay (nominate).
- Mindanao Hornbill** ◇ *Penelopides affinis* Quite common at PICOP.
- Mindoro Hornbill** ◇ *Penelopides mindorensis* Seen well at Mindoro.
- Samar Hornbill** ◇ *Penelopides samarensis* Good views.
- Visayan Hornbill** ◇ *Penelopides panini* Great views.
- Writhed Hornbill** ◇ *Aceros leucocephalus* (NT) Good views in PICOP.
- Coppersmith Barbet** *Megalaima haemacephala* Scattered sightings, nominate at Luzon, *mindanensis* at Mindanao.
- Philippine Pygmy Woodpecker** ◇ *Dendrocopos maculatus* Several sightings.
- White-bellied Woodpecker** *Dryocopus javensis* Scattered sightings.
- Spot-throated Flameback** ◇ *Dinopium everetti* Good views on Palawan. A recent split.



The splitting of Greater Flameback produced 4 endemic flamebacks in the Philippines. We saw them all! Red-headed, Buff-spotted, Yellow-faced and Luzon. (DLV)

- Buff-spotted Flameback** ◇ *Chrysocolaptes lucidus* Seen well (*montanus*).
- Luzon Flameback** ◇ *Chrysocolaptes haematribon* Seen well at Subic Bay.
- Red-headed Flameback** ◇ *Chrysocolaptes erythrocephalus* Seen very well at Palawan.
- Yellow-faced Flameback** ◇ *Chrysocolaptes xantcephalus* Mega views in Negros.
- Northern Sooty Woodpecker** ◇ *Mulleripicus funebris* Great views at Subic.
- Southern Sooty Woodpecker** ◇ *Mulleripicus fuliginosus* Excellent views of this mega in PICOP.
- Philippine Falconet** ◇ *Microhierax erythrogenys* Several sightings.
- Oriental Hobby** *Falco severus* Great views in Palawan.
- Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus* 4 sightings.
- Red-vented Cockatoo (Philippine C)** *Cacatua haematuropygia* (CR) Good views of 4 birds near Sabang.
- Philippine Hanging Parrot (Colasisi)** ◇ *Loriculus philippensis* Seen several times.
- Mindanao Racket-tail** ◇ *Prioniturus waterstradti* Seen well at Mt Kitanglad (*malindangensis*).
- Blue-headed Racket-tail** ◇ *Prioniturus platenae* (VU) Brief views in Palawan.
- Mindoro Racket-tail** ◇ *Prioniturus mindorensis* Excellent views in Mindoro.

Green Racket-tail ◊ *Prioniturus luconensis* (VU) Great views at Subic Bay.
Blue-crowned Racket-tail ◊ *Prioniturus discurus* Seen very well at PICOP and Negros.
Blue-naped Parrot ◊ *Tanygnathus lucionensis* Common at Subic Bay (nominate); *salvadorii* in Palawan.



White-vented Shama in Palawan. (DLV)

Blue-backed Parrot *Tanygnathus sumatranus* One photographed in PICOP. Very rare in the Phillis.
Guaiabero ◊ *Bolbopsittacus lunulatus* Widespread.
Wattled Broadbill ◊ *Sarcophanops steerii* Brilliant views of 4 in PICOP.
Visayan Broadbill ◊ *Sarcophanops samarensis* Only brief views for some in Bohol.
Whiskered Pitta ◊ *Erythropitta kochi* After a lot of effort, great views of one in Sawa.
Hooded Pitta *Pitta sordida* Seen very well in Palawan (*palawanensis*).
Azure-breasted (Steere's) Pitta ◊ *Pitta steerii* (VU) Excellent views at PICOP (nominate).
Golden-bellied Gerygone *Gerygone sulphurea* Seen at Banaue and La Mesa (*simplex*).
White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus* Widespread (nominate).
Common lora *Aegithina tiphia* A couple of birds seen in Palawan (*aequanimis*).
Bar-bellied Cuckooshrike *Coracina striata* Seen several times.
Blackish Cuckooshrike ◊ *Coracina coerulescens* Several seen well at Subic (nominate).
Black-bibbed Cicadabird ◊ *Coracina mindanensis* Brief views for some.
White-winged Cuckooshrike ◊ *Coracina ostenta* Two showed very well in Negros.
McGregor's Cuckooshrike ◊ *Coracina mcgregori* A few seen very well at Mt Kitanglad.
Pied Triller *Lalage nigra* Seen at various locations (*chilensis*).
Black-and-white Triller ◊ *Lalage melanoleuca* Superb views in Mindoro.
Ashy Minivet *Pericrocotus divaricatus* Seen well at Subic.
Fiery Minivet ◊ *Pericrocotus igneus* (NT) One briefly in Palawan (nominate).
Philippine Minivet ◊ *Pericrocotus leytenis* Seen well in PICOP and Bohol.
Green-backed Whistler ◊ *Pachycephala albiventris* Seen at Mt Polis (nominate).
White-vented Whistler ◊ *Pachycephala homeyeri* Seen in Negros.
Yellow-bellied Whistler ◊ *Pachycephala philippinensis* See Note
Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* Widespread wintering visitor (*lucionensis*).
Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* Fairly common (*nasutus*).
Mountain Shrike ◊ *Lanius validirostris* Good views at Mt Polis (nominate).
Dark-throated Oriole *Oriolus xanthonotus* Seen very well near to Sabang (*persuasus*).
Philippine Oriole ◊ *Oriolus steerii* Seen well at PICOP (*samarensis*).
White-lored Oriole ◊ *Oriolus albiloris* Excellent views at SUBIC and Sawa.

Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis* Fairly common and widespread (nominate).
Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus* A few seen in Palawan (nominate).
Balicassiao ◊ *Dicrurus balicassius* Several at Subic and Mt Makiling.
Visayan Drongo ◊ *Dicrurus mirabilis* Great views in Negros.
Palawan Drongo ◊ *Dicrurus [hottentottus] palawanensis* A few seen in Palawan. Not yet split by the IOC.
Mindanao Drongo ◊ *Dicrurus [hottentottus] striatus* Nominate ssp seen on Mindanao.



Blue Paradise Flycatcher. (DLV)

Mindanao Blue Fantail ◊ *Rhipidura superciliaris* Several seen in mixed flocks at PICOP (*apo*).
Visayan Blue Fantail ◊ *Rhipidura samarensis* One eventually seen at Rajah Sikatuna.
Blue-headed Fantail ◊ *Rhipidura cyaniceps* Great views at Mt Polis (nominate).
Visayan Fantail ◊ *Rhipidura albiventris* Seen on Negros.
Philippine Pied Fantail ◊ *Rhipidura nigritorquis* Several seen well. A recent split.
Black-and-cinnamon Fantail ◊ *Rhipidura nigrocinnamomea* Fairly common in flocks at Mt Kitanglad, (*hutchinsoni*).
Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea* Fairly common and widespread (nominate).
Short-crested Monarch ◊ *Hypothymis helenae* (NT) Seen by some at PICOP (*agusanae*).
Celestial Monarch ◊ *Hypothymis coelestis* (VU) Good views of 2 males for most at PICOP.
Blue Paradise Flycatcher ◊ *Terpsiphone cyanescens* (NT) Seen in Palawan.
Rufous Paradise Flycatcher ◊ *Terpsiphone cinnamomea* Seen well at PICOP (nominate) and Makiling.
Palawan Crow ◊ *Corvus (enca) pusillus* Pretty common on Palawan. Not yet split by the IOC.
Sierra Madre Crow ◊ *Corvus sierramadrensis* One at Sawa.
Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* Common and widespread (*philippinus*).
Citrine Canary-Flycatcher ◊ *Culicicapa helianthea* Seen at Sawa.
Elegant Tit ◊ *Periparus elegans* Widespread.
Palawan Tit ◊ *Periparus amabilis* (NT) Great views near to Sabang.
Horsfield's Bush Lark *Mirafra javanica* One seen near Candaba.



Elegant Tit, Flame-crowned Flowerpecker, Rusty-breasted Cuckoo and Palawan Flycatcher. (DLV)

- Black-headed Bulbul** *Pycnonotus atriceps* A few seen in Palawan (nominate).
- Yellow-wattled Bulbul** ◊ *Pycnonotus urostictus* Nominate seen at Makiling and *philippensis* seen at PICOP.
- Yellow-vented Bulbul** *Pycnonotus goiavier* Common.
- Ashy-fronted Bulbul** ◊ *Pycnonotus* Small numbers in Palawan. A recent split.
- Palawan Bulbul** ◊ *Alphoixus frater* A few on Palawan. Another recent split.
- Sulphur-bellied Bulbul** ◊ *Iole palawanensis* Fairly common in Palawan.
- Philippine Bulbul** ◊ *Hypsipetes philippinus* Nominate common on Luzon, *saturation* in Mindanao.
- Mindoro Bulbul** ◊ *Hypsipetes mindorensis* Seen well in Mindoro.
- Visayan Bulbul** ◊ *Hypsipetes guimarasensis* Seen well in Negros.
- Streak-breasted Bulbul** ◊ *Hypsipetes siquijorensis* Seen on Cebu.
- Yellowish Bulbul** ◊ *Hypsipetes everetti* Small numbers at PICOP (nominate).
- Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* First seen at Candaba Swamp, and common throughout (*gutturalis*).
- Pacific Swallow** *Hirundo tahitica* Widespread.
- Striated Swallow** *Cecropis striolata* Seen a few times (nominate).
- Mountain Tailorbird** *Phyllergates cuculatus* Seen at Mt Polis (*philippinus*).
- Rufous-headed Tailorbird** ◊ *Phyllergates heterolaemus* Singles seen at Mt Kitanglad.
- Philippine Bush Warbler** ◊ *Horornis seebohmi* Seen well at Mt Polis.
- Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealis* Singles seen (and sound recorded) at various locations. See Note.
- Kamchatka Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus examinandus* One seen and sound recorded.
- Philippine Leaf Warbler** ◊ *Phylloscopus olivaceus* Seen at PICOP.
- Negros Leaf Warbler** ◊ *Phylloscopus nigrorum* See Note.



Black-and-white Triller and Magnificent Sunbird. (DLV)

- Lemon-throated Leaf Warbler** ◇ *Phylloscopus cebuensis* Seen well on Negros.
- Clamorous Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus stentoreus* Seen at Bislig Airfield (*harterti*).
- Long-tailed Bush Warbler** ◇ *Locustella caudata* Seen Polis, Kitangland and heard at Compostela Valley.
- Sierra Madre Ground Warbler** ◇ *Robsonius thompsoni* (H) Heard at Sawa.
- Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler** ◇ *Locustella ochotensis* Seen well at Bislig airfield.
- Benguet Bush Warbler** *Locustella seebohmi* (H) Heard at Mt Polis.
- Striated Grassbird** *Megalurus palustris* Common in open areas. First seen at Candaba (*forbesi*).
- Tawny Grassbird** *Megalurus timoriensis* Seen at Polis and Kitanglang.
- Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis* Seen once (*tinnabulans*).
- Golden-headed Cisticola** ◇ *Cisticola exilis* Seen and heard at Bislig Airfield (*semirufus*).
- Trilling Tailorbird** ◇ *Orthotomus chloronotus* Seen at Subic.
- Philippine Tailorbird** ◇ *Orthotomus castaneiceps* Seen on Negros.
- Rufous-fronted Tailorbird** ◇ *Orthotomus frontalis* Seen well at PICOP (nominate).
- Grey-backed Tailorbird** ◇ *Orthotomus derbianus* Seen well at Mt Makiling.
- Rufous-tailed Tailorbird** *Orthotomus sericeus* Several in Palawan (nominate).
- Black-headed Tailorbird** ◇ *Orthotomus nigriceps* Seen well at PICOP.
- Yellow-breasted Tailorbird** ◇ *Orthotomus samarensis* Great views in Bohol.
- Pin-striped Tit-Babbler** ◇ *Macronus gularis* A few seen well in Palawan (*woodi*).
- Brown Tit-Babbler** ◇ *Macronus striaticeps* Seen at PICOP (*mindanensis*).
- Striated Wren-Babbler** ◇ (Streaked Ground-B) *Ptilocichla mindanensis* Seen very well at PICOP and Bohol.
- Falcated Wren-Babbler** ◇ (F Ground-B) *Ptilocichla falcata* (VU) Great views of a singing bird near to Sabang.
- Ashy-headed Babbler** ◇ *Malacocincla cinereiceps* Seen very well at St Pauls.
- Melodious Babbler** ◇ *Malacopteron palawanense* Seen at Balsahan.



Lovely and Maroon-naped Sunbirds. (DLV)

- Chestnut-faced Babbler** ◇ *Zosterornis whiteheadi* Common at Mt Polis (nominate).
- Luzon Striped Babbler** ◇ *Zosterornis striatus* Great views in Sawa.
- Flame-templed Babbler** ◇ *Dasycrotapha speciosa* (LO) In spite of all our efforts, only seen briefly in Negros.
- Negros Striped Babbler** ◇ *Zosterornis nigrorum* Good views in Negros.
- Mindanao Pygmy Babbler** ◇ *Dasycrotapha plateni* Seen well at PICOP.
- Rusty-crowned Babbler** ◇ *Sterrhoptilus capitalis* A couple seen in mixed flocks at PICOP (*euroaustralis*).
- Black-crowned Babbler** ◇ *Sterrhoptilus nigrocapitalis* Seen on Bohol.
- Mindanao White-eye** ◇ (Black-masked W-eye) *Lophozosterops goodfellowi* Seen at Mt Kitanglad and ComVal.
- Lowland White-eye** ◇ *Zosterops meyeri* Seen at La Mesa.
- Everett's White-eye** ◇ *Zosterops everetti* A few at PICOP (*basilanicus*)
- Yellowish White-eye** ◇ *Zosterops nigrorum* Seen several times.



Falcatid Wren-Babbler and Palawan Blue Flycatcher. (DLV)

Mountain White-eye ◊ *Zosterops montanus* Seen on Mt Polis and Mt Kitanglad. See Note.

Asian Fairy-bluebird *Irena puella* Several in Palawan (*tweeddalii*).

Philippine Fairy-bluebird ◊ *Irena cyanogastra* Good views at Rajah Sikatuna.

Sulphur-billed Nuthatch ◊ *Sitta oenochlamys* Two forms seen; *isarog* in Luzon and *apo* in Mindanao.

Asian Glossy Starling *Aplonis panayensis* Common, first seen in Palawan (n nominate).

Short-tailed Starling ◊ *Aplonis minor* A few at Mt Kitanglad (*todayensis*).

Apo Myna ◊ *Basilornis mirandus* (NT) A few seen well at Mt Kitanglad.

Coletto ◊ *Sarcops calvus* Two forms. The nominate on Luzon, *melanonotus* in Mindanao.

Common Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa* A few seen in Palawan (*alawanensis*).

Crested Myna *Acridotheres cristatellus* A few seen at Subic Bay. Introduced.

Chestnut-cheeked Starling ◊ *Agropsar philippensis* Several flocks in Kitangland.



Yellowish Bulbul, Palawan Floerpecker, Chestnut-faced Babbler and Rufous-tailed Jungle Flycatcher. (DLV)

- Stripe-headed Rhabdornis** *Rhabdornis mystacalis* Nominate ssp at SUBIC and *minor* at PICOP.
- Stripe-breasted Rhabdornis** *Rhabdornis inornatus* A few seen very well at Mt Kitanglad (*alaris*).
- Grand Rhabdornis** *Rhabdornis grandis* Seen well at Sawa.
- Ashy Thrush** *Geokichla cinerea* (VU) Two birds showed superbly at La Mesa.
- Island Thrush** *Turdus poliocephalus* Seen twice.
- Eyebrowed Thrush** *Turdus obscurus* Common at Mt Polis and Mt Kitanglad.
- Brown-headed Thrush** *Turdus chrysolaus* One see well at Mt Polis.
- White-browed Shortwing** *Brachypteryx montana* Seen at Kitanglad.
- White-browed Shama** *Copsychus luzoniensis* Great views at Subic (nominate).
- Visayan Shama** *Copsychus superciliaris* Seen well on Negros.
- Black Shama** *Copsychus cebuensis* Good views on Cebu.
- White-vented Shama** *Copsychus niger* Great views in Palawan.
- Luzon Water Redstart** *Rhyacornis bicolor* (VU) Seen very well at Mt Polis.
- Pied Bush Chat** *Saxicola caprata* Two forms: nominate in Luzon; *anderseni* in Mindanao.
- Asian Rock Thrush (Red-bellied R T)** *Monticola (solitarius) philippensis* A few seen. Not split by the IOC.
- Grey-streaked Flycatcher** *Muscicapa griseisticta* A widespread wintering species.



White-winged Cuckooshrike, Visayan Bulbul and Stripe-breasted Rhabdornis. (DLV)

- Rufous-tailed Jungle Flycatcher** ◇ *Rhinomyias ruficauda* Seen at PICOP.
- Mangrove Blue Flycatcher** ◇ *Cyornis rufigastra* Great views on Palawan.
- Mugimaki Flycatcher** *Ficedula mugimaki* Seen at Kitangland.
- Little Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula westermanni* Two forms; *rabori* in Luzon and nominate in Mindanao.
- Little Slaty Flycatcher** *Ficedula basilanica* (H) Heard at PICOP.
- Turquoise Flycatcher** ◇ (Mtn Tr) *Eumyias panayensis* Seen at Polis and *ssp nigriloris* seen in Mindanao.
- Palawan Blue Flycatcher** ◇ *Cyornis lemprieri* (NT) Three birds seen well in Palawan.
- Blue-breasted Blue Flycatcher** ◇ *Cyornis herioti* (H) Heard at Sawa.
- Palawan Flycatcher** ◇ *Ficedula platenae* Great views on Palawan.
- Bundok Flycatcher** ◇ *Ficedula lucionensis* One briefly in Kitangland.
- Furtive Flycatcher** ◇ *Ficedula luzoniensis* Great views on Sawa.
- Cryptic Flycatcher** ◇ *Ficedula crypta* Great views in Eden.
- Philippine Leafbird** ◇ *Chloropsis flavipennis* (VU) Recorded at PICOP.
- Yellow-throated Leafbird** ◇ *Chloropsis palawanensis* Several seen well in Palawan.
- Olive-backed Flowerpecker** ◇ *Prionochilus olivaceus* Seen at PICOP.
- Palawan Flowerpecker** ◇ *Prionochilus plateni* Seen well in Palawan (nominate).
- Striped Flowerpecker** ◇ *Dicaeum aeruginosum* Great views at PICOP.

Olive-capped Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum nigrilore* Seen at Mt Kitanglad and Compostela Valley.

Flame-crowned Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum anthonyi* Great views at Polis.

Bicolored Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum bicolor* Seen a few times (nominate).



Two Birdquest lifers above: *Cryptic Flycatcher* and a poor record shot of *Whiskered Flowerpecker*. *Grey-hooded Sunbird* and *Striated Wren-Babbler* below. (DLV)

Red-keeled Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum australe* Many seen, but particularly common at PICOP.

Black-belted Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum haematostictum* Great views on Negros.

Scarlet-collared Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum retrocinctum* Great views in Mindoro.

Orange-bellied Flowerpecker *Dicaeum trigonostigma* Widespread.

Whiskered Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum proprium* Great views near Davao.

Buzzing Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum hypoleucum* Seen well at PICOP (*pontifex*) and Makiling (*obscurum*).

Pygmy Flowerpecker ◊ *Dicaeum pygmaeum* Scattered sightings.

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker *Dicaeum ignipectus* Two forms seen: *luzoniense* at Mt Polis, and *apo* at Mt Kitanglad.

Brown-throated Sunbird (Plain-t S) *Anthreptes malacensis* Seen in Palawan (*paraguae*).

Grey-throated Sunbird *Anthreptes griseigularis* Seen well at PICOP.

Purple-throated Sunbird *Leptocoma sperata* Seen well a few times.

Copper-throated Sunbird ◊ *Leptocoma calcostetha* Two seen in Palawan.



Turquoise Flycatcher, Long-tailed Bush Warbler, Lowland White-eye and Fire-breasted Flowerpecker. (DLV)

- Olive-backed Sunbird** *Cinnyris jugularis* Common in open country. See Note.
- Grey-hooded Sunbird** ◊ *Aethopyga primigenia* (NT) A few at Mt Kitanglad and Com Valley.
- Apo Sunbird** ◊ *Aethopyga boltoni* (NT) Great views at Mt Kitanglad (nominate).
- Lina's Sunbird** ◊ *Aethopyga linaraborae* Superb views of a pair at Compostela Valley.
- Flaming Sunbird** ◊ *Aethopyga flagrans* (H) Only heard at Mt Makiling (nominate).
- Maroon-naped Sunbird** ◊ *Aethopyga guimarasensis* Seen on Negros.
- Metallic-winged Sunbird** ◊ *Aethopyga pulcherrima* Small numbers recorded at PICOP.
- Bohol Sunbird** ◊ *Aethopyga decorosa* Great views on Bohol.
- Luzon Sunbird** ◊ *Aethopyga jefferyi* Common at Mt Polis. A recent split from Metallic-winged.
- Lovely Sunbird** ◊ *Aethopyga shelleyi* A few seen in Palawan.
- Handsome Sunbird** ◊ *Aethopyga bella* Excellent views in PICOP.
- Magnificent Sunbird** ◊ *Aethopyga magnifica* Great views on Negros.
- Pale Spiderhunter** ◊ *Arachnothera diluitor* Great views in Palawan.
- Naked-faced Spiderhunter** ◊ *Arachnothera clarae* ◊ Seen very well at PICOP (nominate).
- Cinnamon Ibon** ◊ *Hypocryptadius cinnamomeus* Many seen well at Mt Kitanglad.
- Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus* Common and widespread (*malaccensis*).
- Red-eared Parrotfinch** ◊ *Erythrura coloria* (NT) Excellent sightings at Mt Kitanglad.



Scarlet-collared and Black-belted Flowerpeckers, above, and Bohol and Metallic-winged Sunbirds, below. (DLV and NI)

Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata* Seen in Palawan (*cabanisi*).

White-bellied Munia *Lonchura leucogastra* 2 forms: *palawana* at Iwahig and *manueli* in Mindanao.

Chestnut Munia *Lonchura atricapilla* First seen at Candaba, with one lot at Bislig airfield (*jagori*).

Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla tschutschensis* Several sightings.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* Scattered sightings.

Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus* Several sightings.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* Several seen at Mt Polis.

Pechora Pipit *Anthus gustavi* One seen well at Makiling.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* Seen at Iwahig rice fields.



Lemon-throated and Negros Leaf Warblers, above, and Olive-capped Flowerpecker and Visayan Fantail, below. (DLV)

White-cheeked Bullfinch \diamond *Pyrrhula leucogenis* Good views at Kitanglad (*steerei*).

Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* Great views on Polis.

MAMMALS

Mindanao Squirrel *Sundasciurus mindanensis* One seen.

Golden-capped Acerodon (Golden-crowned Flying Fox) *Acerodon jubatus* Great looks at Subic Bay.

Large Flying-Fox *Pteropus vampyrus* Great looks in the colony at Subic Bay with the above.

Long-tailed Macaque (Crab-eating M) *Macaca fascicularis* Seen at several sites.

NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

Philippine Hanging Parrot (Colasisi) *Loriculus philippensis*

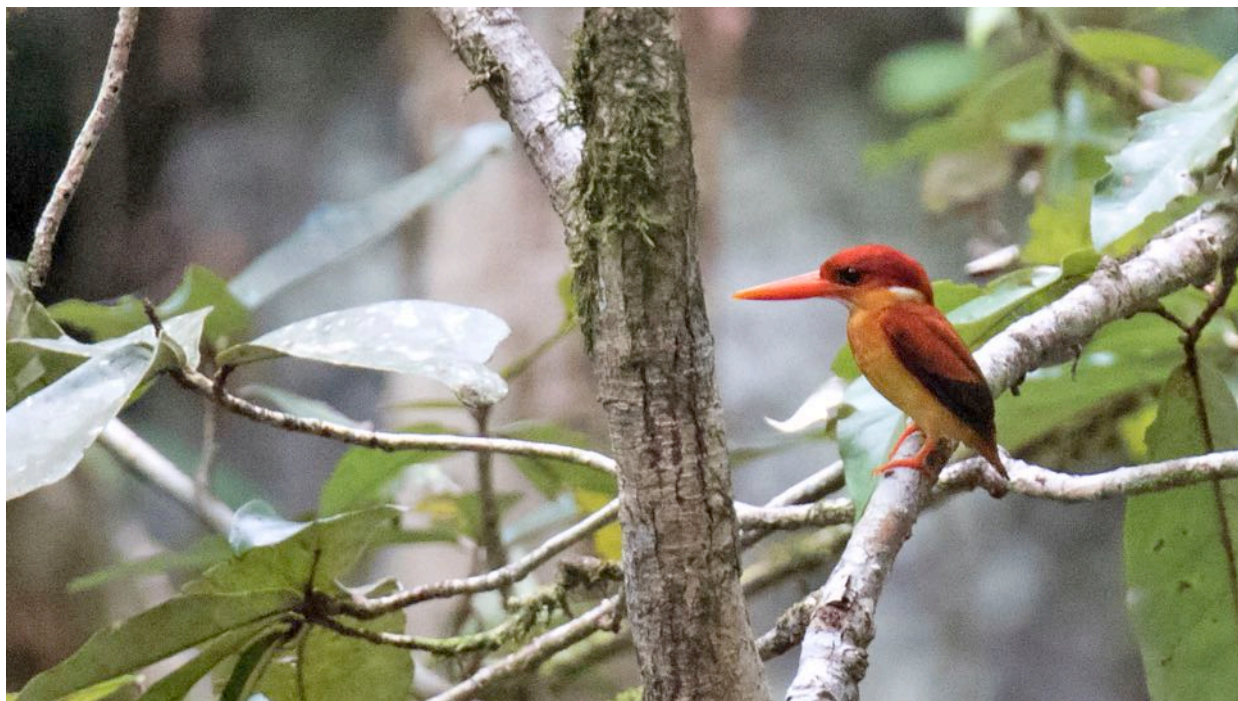
Four forms were seen during the tour. The nominate form was found on Luzon, *apicalis* on Mindanao, *chrysonotus* on Cebu and *mindorensis* on Mindoro.

Philippine Coucal *Centropus viridis*

Nominate birds were seen at several sites, but on Mindoro, the interesting and all glossy black race *mindorensis* was seen well at Siburan, Sablayan Penal Colony.

Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher *Ceyx erithaca*

The rufous-backed forms (like those seen on Palawan) are sometimes split off as a separate species, Rufous-backed Kingfisher *C. rufidorsa*. However, the IOC do not recognise *rufidorsa* as a subspecies even. They list the form in the Philippines as *motleyi*.



Philippine Trogon *Harpactes ardens*

Three subspecies were noted. The nominate, *ardens*, showed well at PICOP. In Rajah Sikatuna National Park, Bohol we had great views of the subspecies *linae*, while in the Sierra Madre Mountains we saw the form *herberti*.

Bar-bellied Cuckooshrike *Coracina striata*

No fewer than 5 subspecies noted! Nominate on Luzon, *difficilis* on Palawan, *kochii* on Mindanao, *panayensis* on Negros and the rather plain and different-looking *boholensis* on Bohol.

Yellow-bellied Whistler *Pachycephala philippinensis*

We saw three forms. On Mindanao, *apoensis* was fairly common in mixed flocks at PICOP and Mt Kitanglad. On Bohol, *boholensis* was seen at Rajah Sikatuna National Park, and in the Sierra Madre Mountains a couple of the nominate form were seen.

Elegant Tit *Periparus elegans*

No fewer than 4 subspecies noted. First site for each form as follows: Subic Bay (*gilliardi*), Mt Polis (*montigenus*), Mt Kitanglad (*mindanensis*) and Negros (*albescens*).

Yellow-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus goiavier*

Nominate (Luzon and Negros), *suluensis* (Mindanao), *samarensis* (Cebu and Bohol).

Negros Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus nigrorum*

We saw three forms of this recently split species. On Luzon, we saw *benguetensis* at Mt Polis, on Mindanao we saw *flavostriatus* at Mt Kitanglad and on Negros we saw the nominate form above Mantaquil.

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis*

With the recent splitting of Japanese Leaf Warbler *P. Xanthodryas* and Kamchatka Leaf Warbler *P. examinandus*, the field ID of non-calling individuals is not possible, based on current knowledge. Of the birds sound-recorded, most were Arctic, with one Kamchatka also recorded.

Long-tailed Bush Warbler *Locustella caudata*

Two forms were recorded. The nominate was seen very well at Mt Polis, while the form *unicolor* was heard at Mt Kitanglad. The two forms are vocally and morphologically different and could well be regarded as good species.

Mountain White-eye *Zosterops montanus*

Three forms seen - *whiteheadi* was common on Mt Polis, *vulcani* was common at Mt Kitanglad and *pectoralis* was seen on Negros.

Olive-backed Sunbird *Cinnyris jugularis*

We saw three forms during the tour. On Luzon, we saw the nominate form at Subic Bay and *obscurior* in the Sierra Madre Mountains. On Palawan, we saw the form *aurora* which is distinctive as it shows an orange breast.



Olive-backed Sunbird of the form aurora. (DLV)



Philippine Eagle-Owl and Ashy Thrush. (DLV)

