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Sulawesi and Halmahera

18 day Birding Tour

OVERVIEW

Sulawesi is one of the four Greater Sunda Islands of Indonesia, and is situated east of Borneo, west of the Maluku Islands, and south of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. It is the world's eleventh largest island. The name *Sulawesi* possibly comes from the words *sula* ("island") and *besi* ("iron") and may refer to the historical export of iron from the rich Lake Matano iron deposits. The name came into common use in English following Indonesian independence.

Sulawesi is part of Wallacea, meaning that it has a mix of both Indomalayan and Australasian flora and fauna species that reached the island by crossing deep-water oceanic barriers. Sulawesi lies east of the "Wallace Line", named after the 19th century naturalist Alfred Russell Wallace who first reported the distinct differences in species composition between eastern and western Indonesia. There are 8 national parks on the island, of which 4 are mostly marine.

The rich tropical jungles, dense rainforests and rugged mountain peaks of Sulawesi contain an incredible amount of endemism. Birding in Sulawesi is an amazing experience because nearly 100 of the 330 or so bird species that have been recorded here are endemic (67) or near endemic (26) and first-time visitors will be forgiven for thinking that they are in that avian paradise they have always dreamt of, where almost every different species they see is a new one. Probably most famous among these endemic birds is the Standardwing, a bird-of-paradise famous for its spectacular aerial display, "parachuting" with its wings and its vivid green breast shield spread, and the wing "standards" fluttering above its back. Stunningly-coloured kingfishers illuminate the forest along with the mound-building Maleo, Purple-bearded Bee-eater hawks for insects, and brightly-colored parrots, woodpeckers and stunning hornbills are easily seen.

Not only are the birds spectacular, but many endemic mammals also inhabit this island. This itinerary gives us a chance to crisscross the island country to find the best spots in this most endemic-rich place.

The adjacent smaller island of Halmahera is similarly packed with endemics and is equally high on most world birders' wish lists.

DAILY SUMMARY

DAY 1	Arrival in Manado - Tangkoko
DAY 2	Birding Tangkoko
DAY 3	Birding Tangkoko
DAY 4	Tangkoko – Tomohon
DAY 5	Birding on Minahasa highland - Manado
DAY 6	Manado – fly to Ternate – Sofifi - Wasile
DAY 7	Wasile - Birding at Foli area
DAY 8	Birding along Buli roadside
DAY 9	Wasile – Binagara – Sofifi - Ternate
DAY 10	Ternate – fly to Makassar /Karaenta forest
DAY 11	Birding at Karaenta forest – Luwuk - Taima
DAY 12	Taima
DAY 13	Birding in Taima forest - Luwuk
DAY 14	Luwuk – fly to Palu – Lore Lindu
DAY 15	Birding in Lore Lindu (Lake Tambing and roadside)
DAY 16	Birding along Anaso track
DAY 17	Lore Lindu – Biromaru/Paneki forest
DAY 18	Palu - fly to Jakarta for departure home

DETAILED DAILY ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrival in Manado - Tangkoko

Our trip starts in Singapore, where we will meet at Changi Airport. It is the major civilian airport for Singapore, and one of the largest transportation hubs in Southeast Asia. We will fly (3 and a half hours) from here to Sam Ratulangi International Airport, just outside Manado. Manado is the capital city of the North Sulawesi province. The city is located at the Bay of Manado, and is surrounded by mountains. From here we will drive to Tangkoko Nature Reserve (2 hours).

We'll spend the afternoon birding around the park; here we should get a chance to see one of the smallest primates on earth, the Spectral Tarsir, as well as the Celebes Crested Macaque.

🏠 **Accommodation: Tangkoko Hill Resort or similar**

DAY 2&3: Birding Tangkoko

We have two full days birding in the Tangkoko Nature Reserve.

Tangkoko Batuangus Nature Reserve also known as Tangkoko-Batuangus Dua Saudara covers an area of 8,700 hectares and includes three mountains: Mount Tangkoko (1,109 meters), Mount Dua Saudara (1,361 meters) and Mount Batuangus (450 meters). It is a reserve with easy access and is a great introduction to Sulawesi's birds. The reserve protects at least 127 mammal, 233 bird and 104 reptile and amphibian species. Of these 79 mammal, 103 bird and 29 reptile and amphibian species are endemic to the island.

We will search for target species like Green-backed Kingfisher, Sulawesi Lilac Kingfisher, Ruddy Kingfisher, Sulawesi Dwarf Kingfisher, Sulawesi Pitta, Spot-tailed Goshawk, Blue-backed Parrot, Philippine Megapode, Stephan's Dove, Sulawesi Pitta, Ashy Woodpecker, Sulawesi Pygmy Woodpecker, Yellow-breasted Racquet-tail, Golden-mantled Racquet-tail, Finch-billed Myna, White-necked Myna, Sulawesi Myna, Sulawesi Triller, Purple-winged Roller, Minahasa Masked Owl, Ochre-bellied Boobook, Stephan's Dove, Red-backed Thrush, and Grey-sided and Yellow-sided Flowerpecker.

For part of the day we'll use an outrigger canoe to boat across the mangrove forest to see Great-billed Kingfisher, White-rumped Cuckooshrike, Great-billed Heron, various frigatebirds, Pied Imperial Pigeon, Blue Rock Thrush, and a number of terns.

🏠 **Accommodation: Tangkoko Hill Resort or similar**

DAY 4: Tangkoko – Tomohon (Mount Mahawu)

In the morning we will continue birding at Temboan hill, looking for species we might still be missing.

After lunch we will drive to Tomohon to bird the Mount Mahawu Protected Forest. Gunung Mahawu is a 1324 metre high forested volcano with an emerald-green lake and yellow sulphur deposits. It is one of the Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) in Asia designated by Birdlife International. We will try to spot the Scaly-breasted Kingfisher, Sulawesi Goshawk, Small Sparrow-hawk, Lilac-cheeked Kingfisher, Green-backed Kingfisher, Blue-eared Kingfisher, Collared Kingfisher, Sulawesi Scops Owl, Speckled Boobook, Ochre-bellied Boobook, Sulawesi Babbler, Chestnut-backed Bush-Warbler, Sulawesi Blue-Flycatcher, Pale-blue Monarch, Isabelline Bush-hen, Barred Rail, White-browed Crake, Sulawesi Myzomela, Island Flycatcher, Citrine Flycatcher, Grey-sided

Flowerpecker, Yellow-sided Flowerpecker, Spot-tailed Goshawk, Superb Fruit-dove, Sulawesi Swiftlet, Grey-sided Flowerpecker, Yellow-sided Flowerpecker and many more.

🏠 **Accommodation: Mountain View Resort, Tomohon**

DAY 5: Birding on Minahasa highland - Manado

Today we will visit Gunung Mahawu again for another chance to look for Scaly-breasted Kingfisher, Sulawesi Blue Flycatcher, Yellow-vented Whistler, Sulawesi Leaf-warbler, Streak-headed Dark-eye, Crimson-crowned Flowerpecker, Sulawesi Myzomela, Isabelline Bush-hen and other endemic species of the highland forest.

We will then drive down to Tondano lake to look for shore birds and Clamorous Reed Warbler, Common Moorhen, Javan Pond Heron, Purple Heron, Dusky Moorhen, Comb-crested Jacana, Spotted Dove, Wandering Whistling-Duck, White-browed Crake, Wood Sandpiper, Yellow Bittern, Spotted Harrier and White-bellied Sea Eagle. At 4 278 hectares, Tondano lake is the second biggest lake (after Toba lake in Sumatra) in Indonesia and is surrounded by the Tondano Caldera with its volcanoes.

After lunch we will check-out from the accommodation and go birding on some rice-fields to look for Munias, Java Sparrow and Spotted Harrier.

Later this evening we will drive down to Manado.

🏠 **Accommodation: Grand Central Hotel**

DAY 6: Manado – fly to Ternate – Sofifi - Wasile

After breakfast we will transfer to the airport for an hour long flight scheduled to depart in the morning to Sultan Babullah Airport on Ternate island, close to the city of Ternate. Ternate is an island in the Maluku Islands (Moluccas) of eastern Indonesia. It was the center of the former Sultanate of Ternate, and is a visually dramatic cone shape. The island and its sister island Tidore were once the world's single major producer of cloves, a commodity that allowed their sultans to become amongst the wealthiest and most powerful of all sultans in the Indonesian region. In the precolonial era, Ternate was the dominant political and economic power over most of the "Spice Islands" of Maluku.

After arriving in Ternate we will then travel onwards by a speedboat or ferry across to Sofifi, a town on the west coast of the Indonesian island of Halmahera, and since 2010 the capital of the province of North Maluku. From there we will drive to the Wasile district and the village of Wasile.

We'll do some birding along the way and look out for Blyth's Hornbill, Blue-and-white Kingfisher, Sombre Kingfisher, Moluccan Cuckoo-shrike, Halmahera Cuckoo-shrike, Goliath Coucal, Long-billed Crow, Blue-capped Fruit Dove, Red-cheeked Parrot, Eclectus Parrot, Gurney's Eagle, Moluccan Flycatcher, Spectacled Monarch, and Moluccan

Golden Bulbul. We'll also do some night birding here and search for Halmahera Boobook, Moluccan Scops Owl, and Moluccan Owlet-nightjar.

🏠 **Accommodation: Wisma Kita Homestay in Wasile**

DAY 7: Wasile - Birding at Foli area

Today we depart early in the morning and drive to Foli. Foli is regularly visited by birders and a well-known track from the village leads through open areas into somewhat intact forest on the ridges. We will walk down to the lek of the Standardwing. Their raucous calls echo through the forest, and we'll spend a while enjoying these amazing birds.

We then continue birding along the logging road to look for Purple Dollarbird, Ivory-breasted Pitta, Common Paradise Kingfisher, Sombre Kingfisher, Azure Kingfisher, Dusky Megapode, Halmahera Oriole, Spectacled Imperial Pigeon, Grey-headed Fruit Dove, Blue-capped Fruit-dove, Scarlet-breasted Fruit-dove, Chattering Lory, Moluccan Goshawk, Moluccan Hanging Parrot, Drab Whistler, White-naped Monarch, Paradise Crow and Cream-throated White-eye. We'll do some night birding again to look for Halmahera Boobook, Moluccan Scops Owl, and Moluccan Owlet-nightjar.

🏠 **Accommodation: Wisma Kita Homestay in Wasile**

DAY 8: Birding along Buli roadside

Today we will be birding along the Buli Pass roadside for species that we might have missed like White-naped Monarch, Dusky Friarbird, White-streaked Friarbird, Nicobar Pigeon, Violet-necked Lory, Gurney's Eagle, Scarlet-breasted Fruit Dove, Paradise-crow, Halmahera Cuckoo-shrike, Moluccan Cuckoo-shrike, Moluccan Kingparrot, Great-billed Parrot, Chattering Lory, Halmahera Flowerpecker, Scarlet-breasted FruitDove, Moluccan Goshawk, MoluccanHanging Parrot. Ivory-breasted Pitta, Drab Whistler, Moluccan Goshawk, Gurney's Eagle and Goliath Coucal.

🏠 **Accommodation: Wisma Kita Homestay in Wasile**

DAY 9: Wasile – Binagara – Sofifi - Ternate

After breakfast we make our way to Binagara, where there is a chance to spot Invisible Rail, Variable Dwarf Kingfisher and Azure Kingfisher. We will make our way to Sofifi, whilst birding along the way.

We'll spend the morning looking for species we may have missed the day before and then begin the drive back to Sofifi where there is a good chance of finding Beach

Kingfisher in the mangrove forest. Upon arrival in Sofifi we will continue birding and then return to Ternate via speedboat or Ferry.

We will arrive in Ternate late at night.

 **Accommodation: Batik Hotel**

DAY 10: Ternate – fly to Makassar /Karaenta forest

After breakfast we will be transferred to the airport for our flight (90 minutes) to Sultan Hasanuddin International Airport, 20 km northeast of Makassar's city centre. Makassar (sometimes spelled Macassar) is the provincial capital of South Sulawesi. It is the largest city on the island of Sulawesi in terms of population, and the fifth largest city in Indonesia. From 1971 to 1999, the city was named Ujung Pandang, after a precolonial fort in the city, and the two names are often used interchangeably. The city is located on the southwest coast of the island of Sulawesi, facing the Makassar Strait.

After arrival in Makassar we will be birding near the airport to look for Barred Buttonquail, Pale-headed Munia, and Lemon-bellied White-eye.

We will then drive to Rammang-Rammang where we will spend the afternoon birding at secondary forest to look for Black-ringed White-eye, Sunda Teal, Sulawesi Pitta, Sulawesi Babbler, Piping Crow, Sulawesi Serpent Eagle, Speckled Boobook, and Sulawesi Owl.

 **Accommodation: Dalton Hotel near airport**

DAY 11: Birding at Karaenta forest – Luwuk - Taima

We will depart early morning to Karaenta forest to find species that we may have missed. Karaenta Nature Reserves is located about 30km from the Makassar Airport and we go here to see Black-ringed White-eye, a specialty only found in the south. A number of other birds are also present, notably Piping Crow and an as-yet undescribed species referred to as Sulawesi Brown Flycatcher.

After lunch we make our way to the airport for our flight (just over one hour) to Syukuran Aminuddin Amir Airport near Luwuk. Luwuk is the capital of the Banggai Regency in Central Sulawesi.

We will then take a 4 hour drive to our destination Taima.

 **Accommodation: Home Sweet Home**

DAY 12: Taima

Full day of birding looking for Maleo in Taima, here we can also see Banded Rail, Pink-necked and Grey-cheeked Green Pigeons, Green Imperial Pigeon, White-rumped Cuckoo-shrike, Knobbed Hornbill, and Purple-winged Roller.

In Taima, one of the most reliable places for Maleo, the local people, in partnership with the international 'Alliance for Tompotika Conservation', have set up a Maleo reserve, complete with an observation tower.

Tonight we will go night birding to look for Minahasa Masked Owl.

🏠 Accommodation: Home Sweet Home

DAY 13: Birding in Taima forest - Luwuk

This morning we will go birding and try to get good views of Maleo, then continue to the farmlands to look for many fascinating lowland Sulawesi species.

After lunch we will drive back to Luwuk, again making birding stops along the way.

🏠 Accommodation: Santika Hotel, Luwuk

DAY 14: Luwuk – fly to Palu – Lore Lindu

After breakfast we will transfer to the Luwuk airport for our flight (just over one hour) to Mutiara SIS Al-Jufrie Airport near Palu, the capital city of the province of Central Sulawesi. Palu is at the mouth of the Palu river, and because of its sheltered position between mountain ridges, the climate is unusually dry.

We will have lunch in Palu and then make our way to Lore Lindu National Park (3-4 hours). The park is located in about 50km southeast from Palu. The park is designated as part of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The park is very large, but the best birding is in a fairly small area around Wuasa/Sedoa, Lake Taming, and the Anaso Track. The park protects montane forest and is excellent for high mountain specialties. It provides habitat to numerous rare species, including 77 bird species endemic to Sulawesi. In addition to its rich wildlife, the park also contains megaliths dating from before 1300 AD.

🏠 Accommodation: Nasional Homestay or similar

DAY 15: Birding in Lore Lindu (Lake Taming and roadside)

We will start birding early this morning at Lake Taming (a small lake around 1700m above sea level) and along the roadside to find Cinnabar Boobook and Sulawesi Thrush. From here we will continue to Lake Taming to find more endemic species like Sulawesi Drongo, Lesser Sulawesi Honeyeater, Yellow-and-green Lorikeet, Sulawesi Blue Flycatcher, Blue-fronted Blue Flycatcher, Spot-tailed Goshawk, Small Sparrow-hawk, Sulawesi Goshawk, Malia, Pygmy Sulawesi Cuckoo-shrike, Cerulean Cuckoo-shrike, Streak-headed Dark-eye, Sulawesi Leaf-warbler, Fiery-browed Myna and much more.

We will go birding tonight to look for Speckled Boobook, Sulawesi Owl and Minahasa Masked Owl.

🏠 **Accommodation: Nasional Home stay or similar**

DAY 16: Birding along Anaso track

We will depart early morning and hike up along Anaso track to look for target species like Diabolical Nightjar, Grey-headed Imperial Pigeon, Sombre Pigeon, Purple-bearded Bee-eater, Greater Sulawesi Honeyeater, Indonesian Serin and Hylocitrea. The lower sections of the Anaso track offer additional species such as Pygmy Cuckooshrike, Maroon-backed Whistler and Chestnut-backed Bush-Warbler. The track climbs upwards and the habitat gradually changes. Around 3-4km up the track at around 2000m above sea level the track opens up into some small clearings where Diabolical Nightjar is often seen in a day roost. Further up where the forest becomes lower and more mossy, two sought-after specialties are most easily found, namely Great Shortwing and Geomalina. Also present are Dark-eared Myza and White-eared Myza. Just over the crest of the trail around 2300m above sea level, the trail turns into a somewhat indistinct footpath where Mountain Serin (the orange-coloured Sulawesi version) is often seen, along with the high altitude Olive-flanked Whistler. In all the Anaso track is around 10km long. The track used to be passable by 4x4 jeep but lately it has fallen into disrepair and can now only be accessed on foot.

After that we continue to bird along the Padaeha roadside which is another productive place for endemic species such as Sulawesi Cicadabird, Piping Crow, Knobbed Hornbill, Rufous-throated Flycatcher, Sulawesi Blue Flycatcher, Ivory-backed Wood-swallow, Crimson-crowned Flowerpecker and many others.

🏠 **Accommodation: Nasional Homestay or similar**

DAY 17: Lore Lindu – Biromaru/Paneki valley

Today we will continue birding along the roadside, then drive down to Oloboju where we can see Savanna Nightjar at day-roosting sites on the ground. We will also look for White-

shouldered Triller, Pale-headed Munia, Lemon-bellied White-eye, Spotted Dove, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, Olive-backed Sunbird, Chestnut Munia, Scaly-breasted Munia, Collared Kingfisher, Sulawesi Serpent Eagle and many others.

We will then continue to Biromaru for a chance of seeing Pale-bellied Myna. Biromaru is located just south of Palu. The area comprises of mainly rice paddies, palms, and a few reed areas. We might also see a few flocks of munias, Cinnamon Bittern, Buff-banded and Barred Rail, Barred Buttonquail and others.

We will continue to the Paneki valley, which consists of mostly disturbed secondary scrub with few pockets of trees and further up the valley smaller parts of concealed forest. Here we will look for Grey-cheeked Green Pigeon, Great Hanging Parrot, Sulawesi Dwarf Hornbill and with a lot of luck even Sulawesi Streaked Flycatcher or Sulawesi Pitta.

We will then continue on to Palu for our overnight stay.

🏠 **Accommodation: Mercure Hotel**

DAY 18: Palu - fly to Jakarta for departures home

Today we will take our flight from Palu to Soekarno–Hatta International Airport (2 and a half hours), 20 km northwest of central Jakarta on the island of Java.

From Jakarta we will then fly onwards to Singapore (90 minutes) and then home.

Please note that the detailed itinerary below cannot be guaranteed and it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads or birding sites, and the discretion of the guides and other factors.

Included:

- All transportation
- Accommodation (Based on a shared room)
- 3 Meals per Day and Mineral Water
- Park permits and conservation fees
- Internal flights as per the itinerary

Excluded:

- Extra beverages in hotel
- Personal beverages alcoholic drinks and soft drinks,
- Laundry,
- Phone calls,
- Personal travel insurance
- Tipping.

Thank you for choosing Nature Travel Birding.