



TOUR INFORMATION FOR SULAWESI & HALMAHERA, INDONESIA

These notes are designed to help you prepare for your tour. Please read carefully.

ENTERING INDONESIA: All citizens will need a passport valid for a minimum of 6 months as from the date of entry into Indonesia, with at least one blank page for a tourist stamp (two blank pages if coming from Bali).

UK citizens (and citizens from another 42 countries) need to proceed through immigration and obtain a passport stamp which is valid for 30 days. Citizens of other countries should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions. UK citizens should check the following website for the most up-to-date information:

http://www.indonesianembassy.org.uk/consular/consular_visa_type_free.html

No compulsory vaccinations are required to enter Indonesia. A valid Yellow fever vaccination is, however, required only if you are arriving within five days of leaving a country where the disease occurs.

As soon as you book on the tour, please email the Sunbird office a colour scan of your passport – the page(s) with your photograph and passport details. These are needed by our ground agent to obtain reserve permits.

It is always a good idea to take a photocopy of your passport and air ticket with you when travelling abroad. They can prove invaluable in helping you get replacements if your originals are lost or stolen. Obviously you should keep the photocopies in a separate bag to the originals.

INTRODUCTORY MEETING: Times for meeting the leader for the main tour and extension will be outlined once the tour is confirmed and in the final information documents. This informal meeting gives the leader the opportunity to introduce everyone to each other and to let you know generally what to expect on the trip - pace of the tour, daily routine, etc.

CURRENCY: Indonesian Rupiah. Credit cards are accepted by some places in Indonesia but only in the major centres, so cash is important to bring for incidentals. ATMs are increasingly available but it's best not to rely on them. We advise against travellers cheques these days as many businesses no longer accept them. You will be able to change currency at the airport and other places.

LANGUAGE: Bahasa Indonesia is the national language. Some younger people speak a little English but it can be difficult at times to find someone who speaks English fluently. Your tour leader speaks conversational Indonesian and we will have a local Indonesian guide with us.

CLIMATE: Like other regions in Indonesia, Sulawesi and Halmahera have a typical equatorial climate with two seasons: wet and dry. The dry season reliably falls between April and October. Mean temperatures at sea level are uniform, varying by only a few degrees throughout the region and the year 78°- 82°F (25°- 28°C). However, temperatures decrease 2°F (1°C) for every 656 feet (200m) of altitude, which provides a cool pleasant climate in upland communities. Even during the dry season humidity can be quite high at certain sites. Strong cyclones and typhoons, which normally occur in higher latitudes, are absent in Indonesia, but afternoon thunderstorms are relatively common.

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ALTITUDE: Nearly all our birding will be at low altitude. The only place where we will bird at altitude is at Lore Lindu from Lake Taming at 1600 m (5,250 ft). to the Anaso Track at 2,600 m (7,545 ft).

PACE OF THE TOUR: Our birding days will normally begin quite early; as we are very close to the equator sunrise is around 06:00 and sunset is around 18.00. On most days, we'll bird in the morning until the midday heat of the day, with breaks after our lunches. Our leader will inform the group of trail conditions ahead of time so that anyone who wants to opt out has that opportunity.

There are two or three long and somewhat strenuous walks; the longest being at Lore Lindu where we will take a trail uphill into the forest for a day of birding. The hike up is about 5 kms (3 miles). Apart from the strenuous walk, most of the walking is fairly easy, on flat terrain with plenty of stops for birding. That said, please be aware that conditions do change and an easy pace cannot always be guaranteed. Very often we'll be birding from or close to the vehicle. At this time of year temperatures are relatively low but it is nevertheless mostly hot and humid, although cooler in the hills and on the coast.

There are some drives of 4 to 5 hours, and 6 internal flights.

HEALTH: It is essential that you contact your own doctor to obtain the latest information on the regions you are visiting. Please contact your doctor well in advance of your tour's departure as some medication must be initiated weeks before the period of possible exposure.

It is recommended that you are up-to-date on routine vaccinations. These include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis, varicella (chickenpox), polio, and your yearly flu jab. It is further recommended that most travellers have protection against Hepatitis A and Typhoid. A Yellow Fever vaccination is required if you arrive within five days of departing from an infected area.

Unless advised otherwise, all tap water is not potable. Bottled water will be provided throughout the tour. You should take care when consuming salads and fresh fruit but cooked vegetables are no problem.

It is recommended that you take medication against malaria. Note that Chloroquine-resistant malaria is found in the region. Mosquitoes can be present in the forests at this time of year so long sleeves and pants are recommended.

Useful information on all aspects of malaria, including how to reduce your chances of being bitten can be found at the website <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/malaria/prevention>

At some sites chiggers can be a problem depending on climatic conditions. Leeches are generally not a problem in this part of the world but cannot be discounted.

Water: Tap water is not potable unless advised otherwise. Bottled water will be provided throughout the tour.

For further information on health advice refer to the Medical Advisory Services for Travellers Abroad website www.masta-travel-health.com

ACCOMMODATION: Our accommodation consists of both western-style hotels and more simple Indonesian-style lodging. Where necessary there will be mosquito netting. Accommodation in the standard hotels will be that with which you are familiar, and have an ensuite shower and toilet. The bathrooms in the Indonesian-style lodges will be much simpler and often be shared. Bathing in the Indonesian-style lodges is sometimes referred to as "mandi," which involves using a small container to scoop water out of a large container and pour water over the body in such a way that this water does not go back into the large container.

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Our accommodation for one night at Tompotika is extremely basic and consists of stand-alone small wooden elevated huts. The bathrooms here consist of “drop-toilets,” which are basically pit latrines without the added comfort of a seat. While bathrooms here are shared, privacy will be guaranteed when in use.

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Laundry service will be available at most of our destinations and is generally not expensive.

ELECTRICITY: Indonesia uses 220 volts, 50 Hz, AC. Indonesian-style plugs are not universal and you may find any type anywhere so bring a universal adaptor. You may want to consult Magellan’s International Travel www.magellans.com, which features a complete range of adapters and converters. A small torch or headlamp may come in handy at times for night walks or in your rooms.

INTERNET AND MOBILE PHONE ACCESS: Free WiFi is generally available in the hotels in larger towns. Most require a password, which we’ll receive when we check-in.

Mobile phones can be useful while on tour but keep in mind that many countries operate on a different cellular technology than Europe, US or Canadian carriers. Your phone may be incompatible with the local system, so please check with your local carrier. Fortunately, with the advent of smartphones, it is easy to download applications such as Skype or Google Voice, which can make calling home free or very inexpensive. Another option is to replace the data (“SIM”) card in your phone in-country. Two or three providers have shop fronts at the exit of the airport. The SIM cards, including data are very cheap. You can expect to pay from \$5 to \$25 depending on the amount of data you require. If you wish to use this option you will need to check that your smart phone has a SIM card slot.

FOOD: The food in Indonesia is varied and generally delicious. Vegetarian options are somewhat limited but by no means out of the question. Most meals are served with meat such as beef or, more often, chicken; pork is not usually available and fresh seafood is a specialty in this huge archipelago. We will enjoy a mix of Indonesian and western style meals throughout.

Indonesian meals are commonly eaten with the combination of a spoon in the right hand and fork in the left hand (to push the food onto the spoon). Black tea is not readily available so, if you prefer this to coffee or green tea, it may be worth bringing your own teabags. The food in this part of the world has a reputation for being spicy but in Indonesian cuisine, chilli or “sambal” (similar in some ways to salsa) is usually added to the meal at the table and is thus optional.

Note: You may wish to bring granola-type bars, dried fruit or other snacks. Convenience stores are very uncommon and the snacks you are used to might not be available.

Sunbird tours are all-inclusive and no refunds can be issued for any tour meals participants choose to miss. While we will try to do all we can to accommodate the requirements of all participants, please note that we cannot guarantee all causes of food allergies can be avoided at every destination. Many restaurants offer set menus and are unable to accommodate all special requests within a group. Thus, participants with significant food allergies or special dietary needs should bring appropriate foods with them for those times when their needs can, regretfully, not be accommodated. Our tours are carefully scheduled to ensure the best possible birding experience and although the leaders will do all they can to make sure the group eats at a reasonable time, sometimes early or late lunches and/or evening meals cannot be avoided. Any participants who need to eat at specific times may need to take supplemental food with them.

DRINKS: Bottled water, a soft drink or a beer (or wine if appropriate) are provided at meals, as is coffee or tea. In addition, we keep a supply of bottled water on the tour vehicles. Bottled or filtered water may also be provided in some rooms where we stay.

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DRESS: Neat, casual clothing is recommended in this part of the world. For men, tie and jacket are not necessary; for women, slacks are perfectly acceptable for any occasion, as are skirts and dresses. This is a rather conservative country so it is not considered acceptable for men to go shirtless. Neat casual clothing for meal times. Please note that if you wish to visit temples in Bali, for example, knees must be covered (male or female). Rain is possible at any time so rain clothes are a must. Bright clothing can scare shy forest birds.

FIELD CLOTHING: The following items are basic:

Long trousers, preferably two pairs.
Cotton shirts
Sturdy walking shoes
Good quality socks

Sun hat
Water-proof clothing
Light jacket for cooler mornings

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS:

Notebook/pencil
Small rucksack/daypack
Torch with extra batteries
Pocket knife (placed in your checked-in luggage!)
Sunglasses & sunscreen
Insect repellent
Ear plugs (if you are a light sleeper)
Small LED headlamp (useful for doing the bird list in the evenings)

Alarm clock
Water bottle
Face cloth
Travel towel
Laundry bag & laundry soap
Bandanna
Personal medication

Optional: Telescope & tripod (recommended if you have them), camera, memory cards, spare binoculars and spare spectacles (in case of loss or damage), field guide, swimwear. Digiscoping is perfectly compatible with the tour, though you must bring your own telescope; the leader's scope will not be available for this purpose. There might be an opportunity for snorkeling if you wish to bring your own mask and snorkel.

Knee-high rubber (Wellington) boots are optional and may or may not be useful depending on the amount of recent rain; be aware that Indonesia is a hot, humid place and wearing boots may predispose you to overheating.)

Note: The most effective insect repellents are those containing at least 35% of the active ingredient diethyltoluamide (DEET). The higher the percentage, the greater the effectiveness. However, care must be taken to avoid getting the repellent on to optical equipment as it dissolves rubber and plastic and can damage coated lenses. A reasonably effective alternative, which isn't corrosive, is Mosi-guard, produced by MASTA, and we recommend this. It is available in most high street chemist (including those at the airport). Camping supply stores sell a product containing permethrin 0.5%, which must be applied directly to clothing in advance of wearing and allowed to dry. This non-staining, odourless chemical is non-toxic to humans and protective on clothing through several launderings. Please make sure you never to spray insect repellent inside the vehicle or when you are standing close to other participants – it may drift on to their optical equipment.

LEADER'S EQUIPMENT: The leader will have a telescope for group use, a spotlight, a first aid kit, copies of the more important field guides, and maps.

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LUGGAGE: Our Final Information document, which will be sent to you approximately three weeks before departure, will give details about baggage weight and size restrictions imposed by the airline used for this tour.

If possible, please bring your luggage in soft-sided bags or cases (rather than large hard 'Samsonite'-type suitcases) as these pack more easily into our vehicles during the tour. Please note that on many tours there are no porters to carry your luggage so please ensure that **no bag is so heavy that you are unable to lift and carry it yourself**. As a general rule, in addition to using your luggage labels, it is a good idea to fix identification to the *inside* of each piece of luggage.

Baggage allowance for the internal flights on Garuda Airlines is 20 kg (44lbs) for check-in bags.*

Carry-on baggage for all internal flights is limited to 1 bag which must be able to fit in the overhead compartment and 1 personal item. Should you go over the weight limit any excess baggage fees will be your responsibility. * Please NOTE that baggage allowances given are our best estimates at this point in time and may be different on the day, dependent upon the aircraft and latest airline policy.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Scenery and cultural photos will be easy to obtain as will photos of a number of open country birds. Taking good photographs of forest birds will be difficult. Camera equipment should be packed in moisture and dust-proof bags, as a precaution. Digiscoping is perfectly compatible with the tour, though it is recommended you bring your own telescope as the leader's telescope will not be available for this.

There will be plenty of opportunities to take photos of birds, mammals and scenery and the leaders will do all they can to accommodate anyone wishing to take photographs. However, if you are a serious photographer please bear in mind that this is first and foremost a birdwatching tour. Please do not allow your photographic desires to conflict with other participants' birdwatching activities.

TRANSPORT: We will be traveling in two or three 4WD vehicles throughout. Seating in the vehicle will rotate, and participants should be able to ride in any seat in tour vehicles. There are as well six internal flights on major internal airlines. Copied below is a list of the vehicles that we will be using for this tour.

- North Sulawesi: a large 10-12 seater bus.
- South & Central Sulawesi: a minibus (Toyota), with a maximum 3 persons in each car
- Halmahera: a minibus (Toyota), with a maximum 3 persons in each car
- 4 Wheel Drive/Pick- up vehicle for a short trip to Foli/Halmahera
- paddling canoe is used for a night safari tour to see Moluccan Scrubfowl in Galela/Halmahera,
- outrigger boat is used for Black-billed Kingfisher and White-rumped Cuckoo-shrike in Tangkoko.
- large well equipped speedboat: Ternate - across Halmahera/North Maluku

SMOKING: Smoking is not allowed in the vehicles or when the group is gathered for meals, checklists etc. If you are sharing a room with a non-smoker, please do not smoke in the room. If you smoke in the field, we ask that you do so well away and downwind from the group if possible.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: Travel insurance is essential and we insist that you take out suitable cover as soon as your tour is booked. If you are bringing expensive optical equipment or other valuable items, please make sure they are also adequately insured on your home contents policy, as most travel insurance policies do not cover very expensive individual items. You may wish to consult your insurance broker regarding coverage.

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Please also ensure that your policy covers you in the event of a medical emergency, cancellation of a trip or severe delays. Medical costs abroad can often be extremely expensive. Please note that Sunbird is not liable for any medical or repatriation costs resulting from injury or illness during a tour or for covering any costs resulting from a flight delay such as extra hotel accommodation.

If you wish, insurance can be arranged by Helen Fisher, Bullerwell Independent Insurance Brokers, 13 Goldington Road, Bedford, MK40 3JY. Tel: 01234-866964. Please contact Helen for a quote and she will send the schedule directly to you.

TIPPING: All tour-based tips are included in the tour price. These include tips to local guides, drivers, hotel porters, and waiters and waitresses when we have group meals together in restaurants. You only need to pay tips for personal services such as room service or drinks from the bar.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Brian J Coates, K David Bishop and Dana Gardner. 1997. *A Guide to the Birds of Wallacea: Sulawesi, The Moluccas and Lesser Sunda Islands, Indonesia*. Dove Publications. The only field guide available for the area is out of print. You may wish to find a library copy and photocopy it or buy a second-hand copy.

Morten Strange. 2012. *A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Indonesia*. Periplus Editions. A newly revised edition of the first comprehensive photographic guide to the birds of Indonesia. Because of its vast size and geographical location, Indonesia has the world's most diverse avifauna. It boasts more than 1600 species – of which 235 species are only found in Indonesia, making it the world's number one travel destination for bird-watching. Not comprehensive though and many important species are not covered.

Stewart McPherson and Alastair S Robinson. 2012. *Field Guide to the Pitcher Plants of Sulawesi*. Redfern Natural History. A beautiful and colourful overview of the eleven species of Sulawesian pitcher plants (*Nepenthes*). Several species featured have been discovered only in the last two years and are documented here for the very first time.

André Koch. 2012. *Discovery, Diversity, and Distribution of the Amphibians and Reptiles of Sulawesi and its Offshore Islands*. Edition Chimaira.

Ruud de Lang, Gernot Vogel, and Marinus S Hoogmoed. 2005. *The Snakes of Sulawesi: A Field Guide to the Land Snakes of Sulawesi with Identification Keys*.

A Whitten, GS Henderson and M Mustafa. 2002. *The Ecology of Sulawesi*. Periplus Editions. *Classic handbook on the ecology of Sulawesi Series: Ecology of Indonesia Volume: 4*. An important work on the environmental problems, ecosystems, resources and human aspects of this little known region of Indonesia, drawing on information and research from over 1600 sources. The second edition has updated information and a new introduction chapter. Fully-illustrated with line drawings and maps throughout, it has 60 additional pages of photographs and colour plates. Unfortunately, this is out of print but may be found through second hand sources.

MAPS: Maps of the region may be available from:

The Map Shop
Tel: 01684 593146
www.themapshop.co.uk

Stanfords
Tel: 020 7836 1321
www.stanfords.co.uk

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OBTAINING BOOKS: Most of the field guides and the major ornithological references in print are available by mail order from booksellers specialising in natural history titles.

Natural History Book Service Ltd
Tel: 01803 865913
www.nhbs.co.uk

WildSounds
Tel: 01263 741100
www.wildsounds.co.uk

ORIENTAL BIRD CLUB: The Oriental Bird Club publications (Forktail and their bulletin, Birding Asia) regularly include information about Myanmar. For anyone with more than a passing interest in Asian birds, joining the OBC is highly recommended. Their publications to date have been outstanding. Please support this charity which aims to raise money to support conservation projects, encourages an interest in the conservation of birds, and liaises with and promotes the work of existing societies within the region. You will find their contact details and further information about the Club at www.orientalbirdclub.org

FINAL INFORMATION: Final information with instructions for meeting the group, hotel addresses etc., and your air tickets will be sent out about three weeks before the start of the tour. Other news will be communicated as necessary. If you have any questions, please contact us.