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Sulawesi and Kalimantan: Indonesia Birding and Wildlife Watching (2025&2026)

26th Dec to 11th Jan 2026 (17 days)

Trip Report



Scully-Breasted Kingfisher (*Actenoides princeps*) by Daniel Ursinton Wiser Sumang

Trip report compiled by Daniel Ursinton Wiser Sumang



Top birds and Wildlife selected by the Client

1. Maleo
2. Geomalia
3. Sulawesi Pitta
4. Knobbed Hornbill
5. Satanic Nightjar
6. White-Headed Kingfisher
7. Sulawesi Hanging Parrot
8. Scally-breasted kingfisher
9. Stork-billed kingfisher
10. White-throated kingfisher
11. Borneo Orang Utan
12. Proboscis monkey
13. Macaque Tonkeana
14. Crested Macaque
15. Sulawesi Bear Cus-Cus



Scally-breasted Kingfisher by Daniel

Tour in Detail:

We began this incredible Indonesia birding and Wildlife watching tour in Ramang-ramang forest for the night birding in Makassar. I met Emily for the first time at Sultan Hasanudin Airport, Maros. Then we drove straight to Ramang-ramang, which took about 30 minutes to reach. We started watching the Sulawesi Scops Owl and the Sulawesi Masked Owl.

In the morning, we drove to the Karaenta forest to sightsee endemic birds, including the White-Headed Kingfisher, Sulawesi Dwarf Kingfisher, and the Black-Headed Kingfisher. We also enjoy stalking Sulawesi Crow, Sahul Sunbird, and Collard Kingfisher. However, we did not even see the Macaque Mauria around. Furthermore, we expected to see the macaque in central, north Sulawesi, and central Kalimantan. Another flight itinerary has been on schedule already. We decided to go to the Airport for a flight to Palu. However, arrival at Mutiara SIS Al-Jufri Airport in Palu was not possible due to the delay. Then, we arrived in Palu and transferred to the Sutan Radja Hotel for one night.



Geomalia by Daniel

The next morning, we drove to Lore Lindu very early. It was about 30 minutes, and we made a first stop at Oloboju Village. We enjoyed sightseeing various birds, including Sahul Sunbird, Mountain White-Eye, Collard Kingfisher, Spotted Dove, Savannah Nightjar, Zitting Cisticola, Javan Pon-Heron, Little Egret, Chestnut Munia, White-Headed Munia, and Little Heron around the rice paddies. We continued driving from 500 to 1600 altitudes above sea level, which is Lore Lindu National Park. When we arrived there, we explored Lake Taming to identify various endemic birds, such as Geomalia, Torquise Flycatcher, Sulawesi Mizomela, Grey White Tail, and Red-Chicked Lorrykeet. After seeing many birds, we continued driving to the National Lodge to check in, where we would be staying



for four days and three nights. Birding around Lake Taming and the part of areas, we also enjoyed sightseeing great ear fruit dove, sulawesi woodcock, sherlin cockooshrike, mountain tailorbird, and black kite eagle. During the night birding, we successfully saw the endemic owl species, including the cinnabar boobook and speckled boobook.

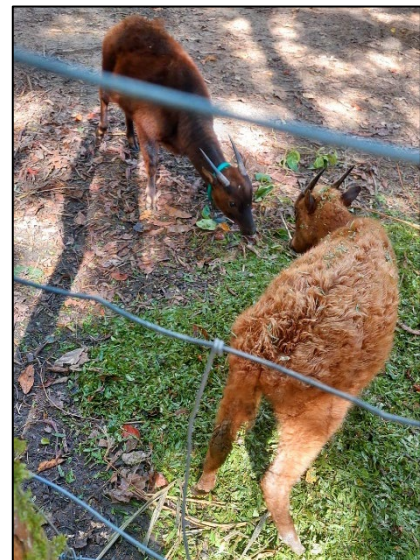


Satanic Nightjar by Emily Graves

Puffy-eyed, we drove to Rorekatimbu Mountain very early to get a satanic diabolical nightjar or a satanic nightjar bird. We started climbing from 1.675 to 2.012, which was the Heliped area. We enjoyed seeing various morning birds, such as gray-sided flowerpecker, Brown-throated Sunbird, White-shouldered Triller, Blue-fronted Blue Flycatcher, Rufous-throated Flycatcher, and Maroon-backed Whistler. Finally, we stopped at the Heliped and got to look at the diabolical nightjar. Emily photographed it directly. Thus, we decided to go back and prepare to revisit Lake Taming to see the very endemic

wildlife in Sulawesi, which is the anoa. Anoa, known as dwarf buffalo or sapiutan, include two living species belonging to the genus *Bubalus* and the subgenus *Anoa*, and are native exclusively to Sulawesi, Indonesia. Emily took so many pictures of the anoa.

Last day in Lore Lindu National Park, we went over to Kebun Kopi mountain to see the macaque tonkeana. When we drove along the way to Kebun Kopi and arrived there, we were very lucky to see the macaque. By the time Emily took the opportunity to see and take a bunch of photos. She said that it is really successful birding and wildlife watching in Central Sulawesi. Therefore, she was very grateful because it was very nice birding in the National Park of Lore Lindu. After sightseeing the macaque tonkeana and birds, such as brahmini kite eagle, black kite eagle, and serpent eagle, we drove to Palu and checked into the Sutan Raja Hotel for one night. We must prepare our next flight and leave for Manado tomorrow morning. We were very excited to welcome Tangkoko Nature Reserve, which was our next birding point.



Anoa by Daniel

Driving away to the Mutiara SIS Al-Jufri Airport, and leaving for Manado. We then arrived at Sam Ratulangi International Airport in Manado, North Sulawesi. We started driving to Tangkoko in the late afternoon. Then we made it to the Tangkoko Nature Reserve, and we stayed in Tangkoko Lodge for two days. At the dinner table, we took the time to discuss the plan for tomorrow morning. Furthermore, we had to take better time to fall asleep early. It was really a super tiring day.

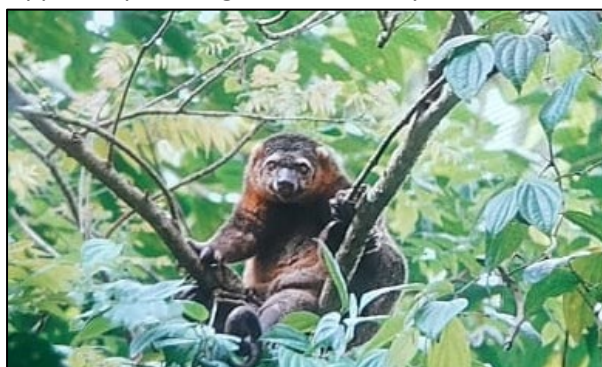
Morning drive to Tangkoko Nature Reserve, we packed our birdwatching equipment and started birding. Our first bird was a Rusty-Backed Thrush. The local guide showed us clearly where the birds were. Then we followed the path, which was really good to step on. We made a stop at the statue of



Sulawesi Lilac Kingfisher by Daniel

and drove to another spot to see the birds in the afternoon, which was located in the Nursery Plant. We had Sooty-headed Bulbul, Black Billed Koel, Isabelline Bush-hen, and Lesser Coucal. We waited until dark and continued night birding. Therefore, we spotted Sulawesi Nightjar and Great Ear Nightjar. Additionally, we could see another Sulawesi endemic, which was the Ochre-bellied boobook. The ochre-bellied boobook, also known as the ochre-bellied hawk-owl, is an owl species belonging to the family Strigidae. People commonly said that it is very rare to spot. We then finally drove back to the Lodge and set up the plan for the last day in Tangkoko Nature Reserve.

Morning drive to Tambunan for the last spot. Here, we took time to explore the highland and hill forests. We started scanning around, finding the Sulawesi Hanging Parrot, Black-Naped Oriole, Knobbed Hornbill, Bey Coucal, Sahul Sunbird, and the Silver-Tipped Imperial Pigeon. It was very incredible birding in the Tangkoko Nature Reserve. We then went



Sulawesi Bear Cuscus by Daniel

Getting ready for our next itinerary, we drove about four hours to Kotamobagu. During our long drive to Kotamobagu, we made a few en route stops to stretch our legs and scan the mangrove belt along the road, finding Brown Throated Sunbird, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, Yellow-Billed Malkoha, and Collared Kingfisher. Shortly after arriving at Sutan Raja Hotel Kotamobagu, we then had dinner and rested for tomorrow's next birding in Tambun.

Alfred Russel Wallace, who was ever there. Then we continued straight and spotted Azure-rumped Parrot, Green Imperial Pigeon, White-necked Myna, Lilac Kingfisher, Knobbed Hornbill, Ashy Woodpucker, and Tabon Scrafowl. We also encountered the wildlife, including the Tarsier, Sulawesi Bear Cuscus, and the Crested Macaque. In addition, we visited the mangrove sea spot, located within the Tangkoko Nature Reserve. We saw various birds, such as Blue Rock-Trush, White-Rumped Cuckooshrike, Sulawesi Hanging Parrot, Pacific Reef Heron, Javan Plover, Whimbrel, Slender-billed crow, Pink-necked Green pigeon, Sulawesi Crow, Imperial Pigeon, Striated Heron, Great Egret, Brahmini Kite, and Collard Kingfisher. We then packed our stuff



Knobbed Hornbill by Emily

back to the Lodge for lunch and rest for an hour before heading to Kotamobagu. During our drive to the lodge, we made a stop for a while on the roadside, which was a part of the mining location, finding Chinese Sparrowhawk, Osprey eagle, Sahul Sunbird, Oriental Darter, Collard Kingfisher, and Little Grebe around the mining river. We were so blessed by the various and endemic birds around Tangkoko Nature Reserve. After finishing our lunch and taking some rest, we had to be well prepared for the long drive.



We drove to Tambun early in the morning. Then, we finally arrived in Tambun, the sanctuary of the Maleo. Our local guide is a ranger, a staff member who takes care of the sanctuary. He came with us and showed us the location of Maleo. We directly saw the Maleo, which is the endemic bird of Sulawesi. Emily took so many photographs, held the eggs, and released one of the Maleo hatchlings. In fact, the Maleo digs a hole together with its partner and lays its eggs inside the hole, then leaves the nest until the eggs hatch. The eggs are not



Tersier by Daniel

incubated directly by the parents but by geothermal heat from the surrounding soil. The ground we walked on was surprisingly warm, with temperatures ranging from 15 to 30 degrees Celsius. This site is located close to a hot spring area. Continuously, we went to another spot for Sulawesi Pitta. The local guide tried to call it, but we must stay very quiet. The place for sightseeing the Sulawesi Pitta is very nice, because it has a bird blind spot. So then, we saw the pitta really clearly. We spotted and took

so many pictures of the Sulawesi Pitta. Emily felt so blessed because she could enjoy seeing the Pitta directly, the Sulawesi endemic bird. This bird is very hard to see because it is not easily accessible when birders visit. We believe that serendipity came with us. We then decided to return to the meeting point and search for other endemic birds, such as the Sulawesi Red-backed Thrush, Black-naped Fruit Dove, Pale-Blue Monarch, Imperial Pigeon, and Sulawesi Drongo. We continued watching birds on the way back to the hotel by walking about 500 to 700 meters, finding the Common Kingfisher, Zebra Dove, Yellow-billed Malkoha, Javan Pond Heron,



Maleo by Daniel

Pacific Swallow, and Sooty-headed Bulbul. Finally, we got back to the hotel. It was very amazing birding in Kotamobagu, especially in Tambun Forest and Malibagu road.

In the morning, we drove to Tomohon, where we also met the local guide, who would show us the Scally-Breasted Kingfisher sitting in a tree without making a sound. We made a stop at Villa Emitta Hotel to stay overnight. We then went to Mahawu Mountain in the afternoon. The first bird we encountered was the Scaly-breasted Kingfisher, one of Sulawesi's remarkable endemic species. This bird is known for its secretive and quiet behavior and often remains completely silent in the forest. Even when the guide repeatedly imitated its call, the bird gave no response at all. Instead of revealing itself through sound, it appeared naturally in the wild. After patiently scanning the trees, we finally spotted the Scaly-breasted



Sulawesi Pitta by Emily



Kingfisher perched quietly on a small branch, blending perfectly with its surroundings and creating an unforgettable first sighting of Sulawesi's unique birdlife. After seeing the Scaly-breasted Kingfisher, we also found several other endemic birds of Sulawesi, such as the Sulawesi Blue Flycatcher, Pygmy Woodpecker, Sulphur-bellied Whistler, Citrine Canary-flycatcher, Crimson-crowned Flowerpecker, Black-crowned White-eye, Warblers, and Bush-hens. These birds showed the rich diversity of bird species found in Sulawesi.



White-faced Cuckoo-doves by Daniel

The next morning, we left for Lake Linow. When we arrived, we were welcomed by light rain and a gentle breeze. Lake Linow is a volcanic lake located in Tomohon, North Sulawesi, and is well known for its changing water colors caused by volcanic activity and mineral content. Despite the weather, we were very excited to be there. We immediately prepared our equipment and began scanning the area with binoculars. During our observation, we spotted several bird species, including Teals, Bush-hens, Sandpipers, Mountain White-eyes, White-faced Cuckoo-doves, and Green Imperial Pigeons. Emily did

not want to miss the opportunity and quickly took many photos of the various endemic birds of Sulawesi. After enjoying the moment of birdwatching at Lake Linow and observing Sulawesi's endemic birds, we returned to the hotel to collect our belongings and checked out. We then headed to Sam Ratulangi International Airport in Manado. Our journey in Manado had come to an end. Only Emily and I continued the trip to Kalimantan. However, before flying to Kalimantan, we first flew to Surabaya to stay overnight and take some time to rest. Before leaving, we said goodbye to the local guides and driver. After arriving at Juanda International Airport in Surabaya, we went to Swiss-Belinn Hotel, which is located about ten minutes from the airport. There, Emily and I took some time to discuss our next travel plans in Borneo, specifically in Central Kalimantan, Pangkalan Bun. We also reflected on and evaluated the journey we had experienced during our time in Sulawesi.

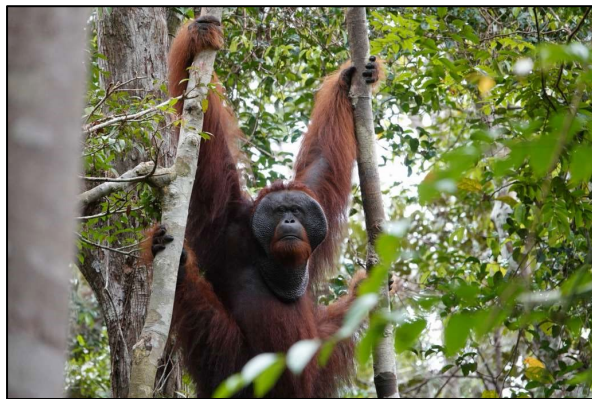
Very early in the morning, we departed for Juanda International Airport in Surabaya. We then flew and arrived at Iskandar Airport, Pangkalan Bun, in Central Kalimantan. From there, we transferred to Kumai harbor, where we boarded a motorboat called a *Klotok* Houseboat. We would stay on the Klotok boat for the next three days, traveling along the long and winding rivers. Our journey began in Kumai and continued along the Sekonyer River. The Sekonyer River is an important river that flows through Tanjung Puting National Park and is surrounded by dense tropical rainforest and peat swamp forest. This river is well known as the main route for wildlife observation, especially for spotting birds and animals along the riverbanks. We were heading to Tanjung Puting, an extraordinary place to observe birds and wildlife such as Bornean Orangutans, Proboscis Monkeys, and Long-tailed Macaques. Along the Sekonyer River, we found several bird species, including the White-throated



Proboscis Monkey by Daniel



Kingfisher, Stork-billed Kingfisher, and Dollarbird. In addition to birds, we also observed wildlife such as groups of Proboscis Monkeys moving together from one place to another along the riverbanks.



Orang Utan by Daniel

In the late afternoon, we arrived at Tanjung Harapan. We then walked through the forest while observing birds and monkeys. Among the birds we saw were woodpeckers, Black Hornbills, and we also spotted Proboscis Monkeys hanging from tree branches and moving from one place to another. We later arrived at the orangutan feeding area, where many visitors had gathered to watch the orangutans being fed by the rehabilitation staff. Emily did not want to just watch, so she took many photos of the orangutans during feeding time. At night, we

continued our exploration deeper into the forest. We trekked through the dense jungle, surrounded by thick vegetation and the natural sounds of the rainforest. During the night walk, we found several bird species such as the Bornean Barbet, Red-crowned Barbet, a water babbler species, and the Black-naped Monarch. We also observed various insects and arthropods, including a long-legged spider, Golden Orb-weaver, stick insects, and giant ants, making the night exploration even more exciting and memorable.

In the morning, we cruised along the Sekonyer River again toward Pondok Tanggui in Camp Leaky, an orangutan rehabilitation area. While traveling along the river, we observed groups of Proboscis Monkeys and Long-tailed Macaques crossing and swinging through the trees. We paused for a moment to watch their natural behavior. During the journey, we also spotted many bird species, including the Green Imperial Pigeon, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Storm's Stork, Blue-throated Barbet, Blue-throated Bee-eater, White-throated Kingfisher, Warblers, Little Heron, Striated Heron, Common Myna, Pied Fantail, White-chested Babbler, Yellow Bittern,



White-throated kingfisher by Daniel

Fork-tailed Swift, and Serpent Eagle. It was an amazing experience to witness such a wide variety of birds and wildlife. Emily truly enjoyed the moment and took many photographs of the different bird species we encountered along the river. We then arrived at Pondok Tanggui, where we were welcomed by very active Long-tailed Macaques. We walked through the forest toward the orangutan rehabilitation area and watched the orangutans being fed. It was truly an amazing experience. Emily and I captured these special moments with our cameras. After that, we returned to the Klotok houseboat for lunch and took a short rest. After that, we returned to the Klotok houseboat with a deep sense of gratitude and enjoyed a pleasant dinner on board.

The next morning, we continued our journey to Camp Leakey, an orangutan rehabilitation and research center. Upon arrival at the jetty, we entered the forest and were accompanied by a local guide, who is also a ranger and staff member. The guide led us to the orangutan feeding site and guided us deeper

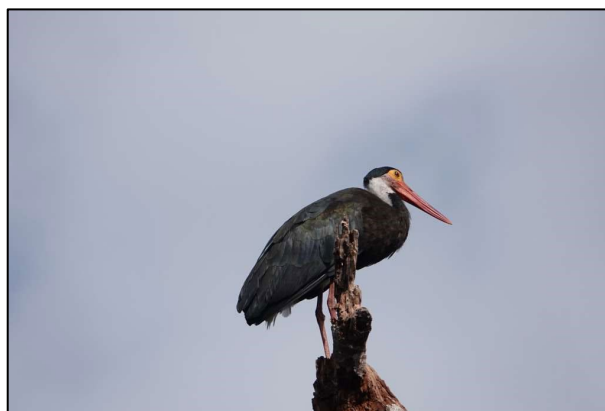


Stork-billed kingfisher by Daniel

into the forest while exploring the area where many birds were active. During the forest walk, we observed various Bornean bird species, such as the Olive-breasted Woodpecker, Scarlet-rumped Trogon, Maroon Woodpecker, Crimson-winged Woodpecker, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Asian Paradise Flycatcher, Chestnut-breasted Malkoha, Raffles's Malkoha, and Whitehead's Trogon. After enjoying the observation of various bird species, we continued our journey to the orangutan rehabilitation site, where the orangutans were fed by the staff. We enjoyed watching

the different forms of orangutans, both females and males. The males often dominated the area and competed for food, while feeding together with the females and young orangutans. We continuously took photos of their activities until the feeding area was taken over by Long-tailed Macaques. After waiting for a while, we returned to the Klotok houseboat for lunch and a short rest. After lunch, we continued our journey by Klotok houseboat along the Sekonyer River. We stopped at a small jetty and trekked into a local village. The village was very remote, and the residents still relied on solar energy for electricity. Daily activities continued as usual, with people fishing for food, gardening, and farming rice fields. The population was quite small, with around 500 to 800 residents, and the village area itself was very limited in size.

After trekking through the village, we returned to the Klotok houseboat and packed all our belongings in preparation for our return to Pangkalan Bun via Kumai. We cruised along the Sekonyer River while enjoying the breathtaking natural scenery of Borneo. Along the river, we also observed Proboscis Monkeys as they carried out their daily activities and interacted with one another and the Storm's Stork. We then arrived in Kumai and continued our journey by car. Along the way, we made a short stop at a traditional Dayak longhouse known as Rumah Betang. There, we observed the structure of the building, traditional weapons used by the Bornean people in the past, and various cultural tools and artifacts. After that, we continued our journey to Pangkalan Bun and transferred to Mercure Pangkalan Bun. There, we rested and prepared ourselves for our departure to Jakarta, marking the final point of our journey. We arrived at the hotel and said our farewell to the local guides, thanking them sincerely for their time, support, and companionship throughout the journey.



Storm's Stork by Daniel

Very early the next morning, we departed for Iskandar Airport. We flew to Jakarta and arrived at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport. From there, we transferred to Orchardz Hotel Bandara. After arriving at the hotel, we spent time talking, had lunch together, and expressed our sincere gratitude to VIT Tours for accompanying us during the birdwatching and wildlife journey in Indonesia, especially in Sulawesi and Kalimantan. Later, Emily and I said our goodbyes. The 17-days journey of birdwatching and wildlife observation was truly extraordinary.



Follow the link to view the Trip Report:

<https://www.vacationindonesiatours.com/recent-tours/>

Bird Seen: 182

Bird Heard Only: 12

Mammals, Agamids, Insects, and Reptiles Seen:

Tonkean Macaque (*Macaca tonkeana*) – Kebun Kopi, Central Sulawesi

Black-crested Macaque (*Macaca nigra*) – Seen in Tangkoko

Sulawesi Bear Cuscus (*Ailurops ursinus*) – Seen in Tangkoko

Gursky's Spectral Tarsier (*Tarsius spectrumgurskyae*) – Seen Lore Lindu NP

Celebes Dwarf Squirrel (*Prosciurillus murinus*) – Seen in Lore Lindu NP

Whitish Dwarf Squirrel (*Prosciurillus leucomus*) – Seen in Lore Lindu NP

Anoa (*Anoa quarlesi*) Rescued from hunters in Lore Lindu NP

Sulawesi Lined Gliding Lizard (*Draco spilonotus*) – Seen in Lore Lindu NP

Montane Long-nosed Squirrel – Seen in Lore Lindu NP

Flying Lizard sp. (*Draco walkeri*) – Seen in Tambun, Maleo Sanctuary

Bornean orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*) – Seen in Tanjung Puting NP

Bornean proboscis monkey (*Nasalis larvatus*) – Seen in Tanjung Puting NP

Borneo long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*) – Seen in Tanjung Puting NP

Golden Orb-weaver (*Nephila pilipes*) – Seen in Tanjung Puting NP,

Stick Insects (*phasmids*) – Seen in Tanjung Puting NP

Giant Ant (*Dinomyrmex gigas*) – Seen in Tanjung Puting NP

Asian Vine Snake (*Ahaetulla prasina*) – Seen in Kebun Kopi

Vocation Indonesia Tours

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