

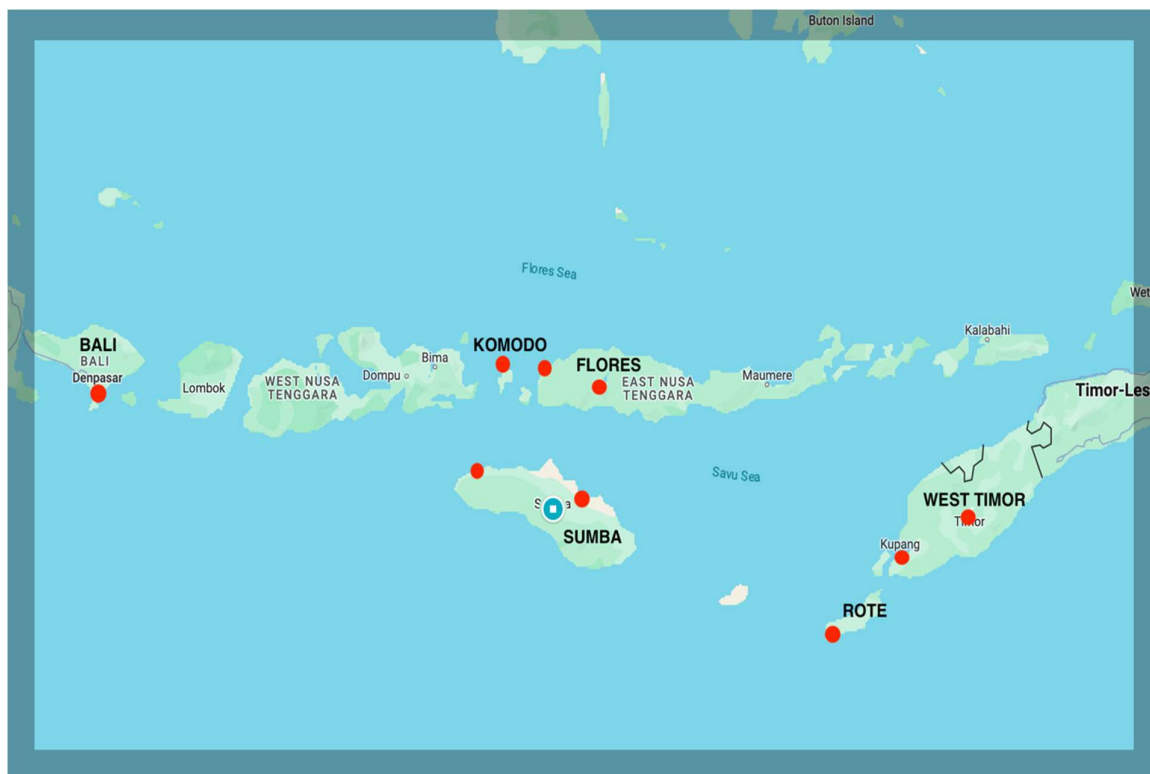


VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS

ITINERARY

INDONESIA THE LESSER SUNDAS MAY 10–30, 2025

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This is VENT's first Indonesia tour in more than a decade to focus exclusively on the Lesser Sundas, an island group steeped in history, culture, and avian endemism. Skirting the southern edge of Wallacea, the more than 900 islands of this volcanic archipelago stretch across more than 600 miles. The entire area is a major biodiversity hotspot. Its birdlife exhibits both a close relationship to that of Australia and an affinity to the Asian avifauna.

The Lesser Sundas are the most varied island group in the vast Indonesian Archipelago, and our tour visits four of the major islands and a couple of smaller ones as well. Each of these islands is a stand-out for birds and natural history; between them all, they offer dozens of species found nowhere else, making the Lesser Sundas one of the most important and rewarding destinations for the birder anywhere in Southeast Asia.

May 10–13, Days 1–3: Travel to Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia. Participants should arrange to depart the USA on or before May 10, crossing the International Dateline and arriving at Denpasar's Ngurah Rai International Airport (airport code DPS) no later than May 13.

Once in Denpasar, you will be met by our local representative for the transfer to the Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua Beach Resort. If time allows, we may pay a visit to nearby Nusa Dua Water Treatment Plant, where permanent wetlands and mangrove forest provide excellent habitat for a variety of ducks, herons, and shorebirds.

NIGHT: Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua Beach Resort

May 14, Day 4: Flight from Denpasar to Tambolaka, Sumba. Our journey to the Lesser Sundas begins with a one-hour flight from Bali. Our 280-mile route takes us across the famous Wallace's Line, marking the change from the Asian to the Wallacean biogeographical realms. For at least 50 million years, the Lesser Sundas have been isolated from mainland Asia by a deep-sea trench, and that isolation has contributed to the evolution of a unique array of wildlife, including an astonishing total of more than 100 endemic bird species.

Our first stop is the island of Sumba, a fascinating and relatively little-visited destination considered one of Indonesia's last wild frontiers, where local traditions in horse riding, spear throwing, and occasional animal sacrifices are still observed. Predominantly limestone and rising to an elevation of about 4000 feet, Sumba is home to thirteen endemic birds and a number of other species of regional significance.

We will enter Sumba at Tambolaka, in the island's northwest, then gently ascend to the town of Waikabubak. Along the way, we will appreciate some of the distinctive features of Sundanese architecture, including curious pointed rooftops and megalithic tombs erected in front yards, a practice based on ancestor worship.



Traditional Sundanese architecture

Our afternoon will include a visit to Lapopu Waterfall, set in an area of mixed forest and rice fields providing an excellent introduction to the local avifauna. Some of the species we may encounter are the Sumba Brown and Blyth's Paradise Flycatchers, Supertramp Fantail, Yellow-ringed White-eye, and the endemic Apricot-breasted Sunbird.

NIGHT: Manandang Hotel, Waikabubak

May 15, Day 5: Tanadaru. The western edge of Manupeu Tanadaru National Park preserves some of the most extensive and most significant forest on Sumba. All of the key endemics are possible here, among them the Sumba Green-Pigeon, Red-naped Fruit Dove, Sumba Myzomela, Apricot-breasted Sunbird, Sumba Brown Flycatcher, Sumba Jungle Flycatcher, Sumba Flycatcher, and the endangered Sumba Hornbill and Sumba Eclectus. This is probably our best chance to observe the critically endangered Citron-crested Cockatoo, a species devastated by trapping and habitat loss. Because access to the forest is limited, we will concentrate on birding roadsides and some short trails.

An optional evening outing will take us in search of two endemic owls, the Sumba Boobook and the Least Boobook.



The endangered Sumba Hornbill. Photo: Scott Baker

NIGHT: Manandang Hotel, Waikabubak

May 16, Day 6: From Waikabubak to Waingapu. The 80-mile drive from Waikabubak to Waingapu traverses the hilly interior of western and central Sumba. As we make our way to the village of Lewa, the varied habitats will provide many birding opportunities. We will pay particular attention to searching for the elusive Sumba Buttonquail, a grassland specialist, and such sought-after forest dwellers as the Cinnamon-banded Kingfisher and the often-frustrating Elegant Pitta, a species more often heard than seen. If time permits, we will also check the Lewa fields, a flooded area for growing rice, known for Pale-headed and Scaly-breasted Munias, Red Avadavat, Zitting Cisticola, and Javan Pond-Heron.

On arriving at Waingapu, we will check in to the Padadita Beach Hotel, featuring modern and comfortable rooms, seaside views, and an excellent restaurant.

NIGHT: Padadita Beach Hotel, Waingapu

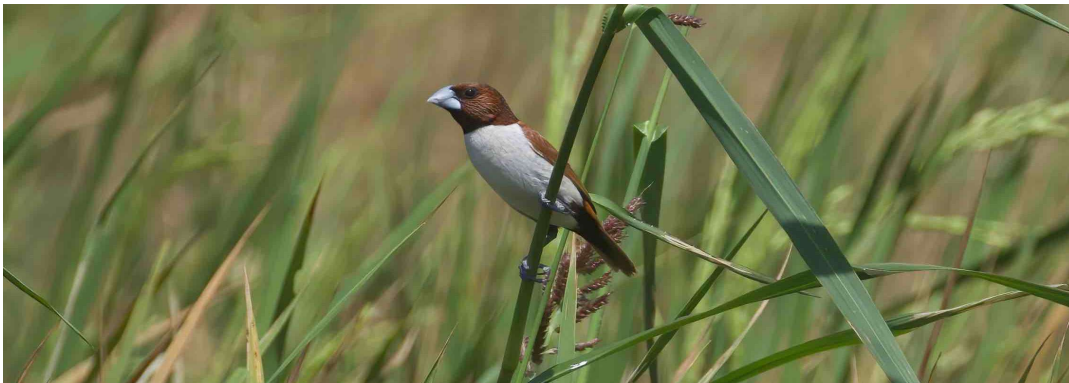
May 17, Day 7: Waingapu. We plan to devote today to birding the extensive grassland areas east of Waingapu and some local wetland sites. The grasslands near Yumbu may produce the Spotted Kestrel, Pied Bushchat, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, White-shouldered Triller, and Paddyfield Pipit; we are also likely to encounter the distinctive *guttata* subspecies of the Zebra Finch. This also a back-up site for Sumba Buttonquail if we have not yet found one. We should be able to visit wetlands such as Menggitimbe Lake, where we expect to find the Wandering Whistling Duck, Australian Swampphen, White-browed Crane, Buff-banded Rail, Yellow Bittern, and Purple Heron among other regularly occurring species.

NIGHT: Padadita Beach Hotel, Waingapu

May 18, Day 8: Flight to Kupang, West Timor, and drive to So'e. A morning flight from Waingapu will take us to the port city of Kupang in the island territory of West Timor. Kupang was a trading hub during the Dutch and Portuguese colonial areas, and today it is the provincial capital of East Nusa Tenggara, a bustling metropolis by local standards but largely overlooked by western travelers.

Timor is the largest and driest of the Lesser Sundas. It is at the eastern end of the archipelago, and its flora and fauna reflect the island's proximity to Australia. Among Timor's twenty or twenty-five endemic and near-endemic birds are several honeyeater species, two lorikeets, a gerygone, and a cockatoo.

A good first stop is the lowland evergreen forest at Bipolo, near the mouth of Kupang Bay. When they are fruiting, the large trees in this remnant woodland attract various pigeons and parrots. Nearby rice fields and fish farms are also worth a look, and a careful scan of the finches here is likely to turn up Red Avadavat, Zebra Finch, and Scaly-breasted, Black-faced, and Pale-headed Munias; we will also hope for the somewhat locally distributed Five-colored Munia. The big prize here, though, is the rare and endemic Timor Sparrow—this species has become increasingly scarce, and finding it can take some luck.



Five-colored Munia. Photo: Scott Baker

We will then head to the highland village of So'e (pronounced So-E), around 70 miles east of Kupang. At an elevation of 2500 feet, So'e is noticeably cooler than the coastal plains, and a convenient base for exploration. We will spend the next three nights at the centrally located Bahagia Hotel.

On one of our evenings here, we will plan to search for the endemic Timor Boobook and the still undescribed "Timor Nightjar" at the nearby site of Oelnasi.

NIGHT: Bahagia Hotel, So'e

May 19–20, Days 9 and 10: Gunung Mutis. We have two full days to explore Gunung (Mount) Mutis and Fatumnasi. At 7,963 feet, Gunung Mutis is the highest point in West Timor; it is part of the Gunung Mutis Nature Reserve. The higher altitude and shallow rocky soils here host a distinctive forest dominated by Timor White Gum or Ampupu (*Eucalyptus urophylla*), another indication of this ecological zone's transitional character between Asia and Australia.

This area harbors most of Timor's specialized montane bird species. Among the endemics we can expect here are the Timor Blue Flycatcher, Flame-eared Honeyeater, Black-breasted Myzomela, Plain Gerygone, Northern (Timor) Fantail, Timor Leaf Warbler, Olive-headed Lorikeet, Timor Friarbird, and both Yellow-throated and Fawn-breasted Whistlers. This has also traditionally been a good site for the increasingly rare Timor Imperial Pigeon and for the beautiful and range-restricted Tricolored Parrotfinch. We will also be on the lookout for the "Mount Mutis Parrotfinch," an elusive species discovered in 2012 and yet to be formally described. The *schlegelii* subspecies of the Island Thrush is frequently reported; the shy Pygmy Cupwing, of the subspecies *timorensis*, is at the southeastern edge of its range here.



Pygmy Cupwing, of the subspecies *timorensis*, photographed at Mount Mutis. Photo: Scott Baker

NIGHTS: Bahagia Hotel, So'e

May 21, Day 11: From So'e to Kupang. On our way back to Kupang today, we will stop at the mid-to low-elevation scrubby woodland of Hutan Lelogama, where we hope to connect with a number of local skulkers. We have a reasonable chance here at the Buff-banded Bushbird (Timor Thicketbird), while the extremely shy Timor Stubtail and Javan (Timor) Bush-Warbler are reasonably common. While the Black-banded Flycatcher is uncommon, the Timor Friarbird and Streak-breasted Honeyeater are expected, and we hope, too, that both the Timor White-eye and the Yellow-throated Whistler prove cooperative.



The Timor Thicketbird is one of several local skulkers. Photo: Scott Baker

NIGHT: Aston Hotel, Kupang

May 22, Day 12: Ferry from Kupang to Rote Island. We will board the ferry this morning for the 1.5-hour trip from Kupang to Rote Island. We expect to arrive around midday, then set out on the two-hour drive to our hotel, taking a leisurely pace and, of course, birding along the way.

Located seven and a half miles south of West Timor, Rote is a small, relatively flat, and sparsely populated island characterized by scrubby tropical savanna, woodland, mangroves, and some wetlands. It has many birds in common with Timor, but recent studies have identified no fewer than three previously overlooked species that are endemic to Rote: the Rote Myzomela, Rote Leaf Warbler, and Rote Boobook. The very distinctive “Rote Fantail” is currently treated as a subspecies of the Northern Fantail, but it too is a likely contender for splitting.



The recently described Rote Myzomela. Photo: Scott Baker

In addition to those three (or four) endemics, a number of species are more easily observed on Rote than on Timor, including the Jonquil (Olive-shouldered) Parrot, Black Cuckoo-Dove, Pink-headed Imperial Pigeon, Timor Bushchat, and Timor Oriole. In general, birds are more abundant and approachable on Rote, and we can hope for some better views and photo opportunities.

NIGHT: 81 Palms Resort, Nemberala

May 23, Day 13: Rote. This will be a full day of birding Rote, with the goal of finding as many of our sought-after species as possible. The myzomela, the leaf warbler, and the fantail are all widespread, and we have several forested sites to choose from. The boobook, however, is more challenging. Our search for this recently re-split owl will be guided by recent reports; most likely, it will require an optional spotlighting excursion farther afield.

NIGHT: 81 Palms Resort, Nemberala

May 24, Day 14: Ferry to Kupang. A visit to Lake Sotimori in northern Rote will take us into some different habitat types, including woodlands and wetlands. Nearby mudflats attract a variety of shorebirds, such as the Red-capped Plover and Pied Stilt, plus a few migratory species in the winter months. We will leave Rote for Kupang at midday.

NIGHT: Aston Hotel, Kupang

May 25, Day 15: Flight from Kupang to Ruteng, Flores. This morning we will fly about 250 miles northwest to Ruteng, on Flores Island.

Long the hidden gem of the Indonesian archipelago, Flores, promoting itself as “better than Bali,” has started to gain the attention it deserves. In contrast to Sumba, Timor, and Rote, this is a geologically dynamic region of dramatic volcanic peaks, perched lakes, cascading waterfalls, and forest-clad slopes. The island’s spectacular mountainous spine comprises 25 volcanoes, 15 of them still active. The lush coast is fringed in mangroves and surrounded by turquoise seas teeming with fish and turtles. Throw in more than 20 endemic and near-endemic bird species, and it is obvious why Flores has become so desirable a destination.

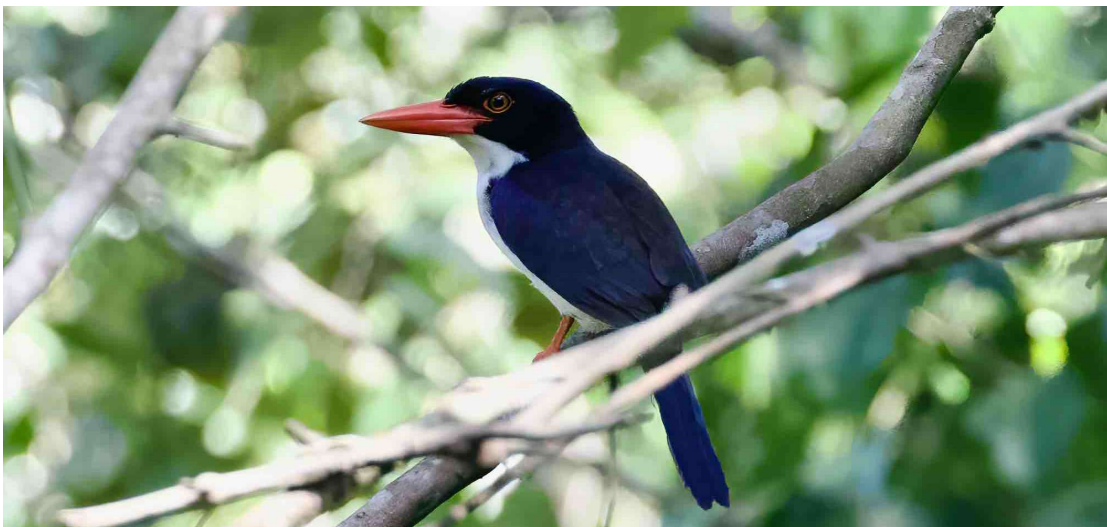
In the shadow of Flores’s highest mountain, 7,800-foot Poco Mandasawu, the highland city of Ruteng is the administrative capital of the Manggharai Regency. We will spend the next four nights at the Ara Garden Inn, set amid extensive gardens and woodland on the outskirts of town. This a wonderfully relaxing base for exploration, and we will spend time this afternoon birding locally.



View from Ruteng

NIGHT: Ara Garden Inn, Ruteng

May 26, Day 16: Drive to Kisol. We will set out at 4:00 this morning on the two-hour drive to the southern coastal village of Kisol, which we plan to reach before daybreak. Our focus here will be on key endemics, the very shy and endangered Flores Crow and the Flores Green Pigeon; the Flores Hawk-Eagle, critically endangered with a population estimated at only 100–240 individual, is somewhat regular here, too, but far from guaranteed. Some other possibilities include Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Green Junglefowl, Ruddy Cuckoo-Dove, Common Emerald Dove, Black-naped Fruit-Dove, Tenggara Swiftlet, Variable Goshawk, White-rumped (Glittering) Kingfisher, Sunda Pygmy Woodpecker, Red-cheeked Parrot, and the elusive Ornate Pitta.



The White-rumped (Glittering) Kingfisher is another striking endemic. Photo: Scott Baker

We will return for lunch, then pay a visit to Liang Bua Cave, just north of Ruteng. It was here in 2003 that archaeologists discovered the remains of an archaic hominin that stood just over three feet tall. This skeleton, estimated to be 50,000–100,000 years old, was determined to represent a new species, subsequently named *Homo floresiensis*, known as Flores Man or, popularly, Hobbits, due to their cave-dwelling habit and small stature. More recent finds suggest that the ancestors of *H. floresiensis* occupied the region as early as one million years ago.

NIGHT: Ara Garden Inn, Ruteng

May 27–28, Day 17–18: Ruteng area. We have two full days to explore some of the higher-altitude forest sites in the Ruteng area. Golo Lusang and Pagal Road both offer access to some of the best habitat, with excellent roadside birding from an elevated vantage point. Together, these sites harbor most of the montane specialties, a number of endemics, and a few bonuses. Noteworthy possibilities include the Sunda Honeyeater, Flores Minivet, Bare-throated Whistler, Brown-capped Fantail, Yellow-breasted Warbler (of the subspecies *floris*), Russet-capped Tesia, Cream-browed and Crested White-eyes, Flores White-eye, Flores Jungle-Flycatcher, Flores Shortwing, Golden-rumped and Black-fronted Flowerpeckers, and Flores Leaf Warbler. Another sought-after endemic is the rare Wallace's Hanging Parrot, known to frequent the area but difficult to predict.

Just east of Ruteng, Danau Ranamese is a densely forested volcanic crater lake, one of the few known sites for the Flores Scops Owl, a species that “disappeared” for nearly 100 years before its rediscovery in 1994.

NIGHT: Ara Garden Inn, Ruteng



Flores Scops Owl. Photo: Scott Baker

May 29, Day 19: Drive from Ruteng to Labuan Bajo. Today we bid farewell to the highlands and embark on the four-hour drive to the coastal port of Labuan Bajo, some 4000 feet below Ruteng. Our birding stops along the way will include a break at Puarlolo, home to the endemic Flores Monarch,

discovered in 1973. This endangered species is restricted to mid- and lower-altitude forest sites in western Flores. Even here the birds are shy, and finding one will likely require some patience; our best chance is in the morning, when we can hope for them to be more vocal and responsive.



The Flores Monarch was discovered in 1973. Photo: Scott Baker

Once a sleepy fishing port, Labuan Bajo, known as the “Gateway to Komodo,” has become a popular travel destination. The village is rapidly evolving to meet the demands of its own success with excellent tourist facilities. We have two nights here to relax and enjoy our fine accommodations at the Puri Sari Beach Hotel.

NIGHT: Puri Sari Beach Hotel, Labuan Bajo

May 30, Day 20: Ferry to Komodo Island. Our tour concludes with a boat ride to the island of Komodo, home of the world’s largest living lizard. Our encounter with the legendary Komodo Dragon—which can reach 10 feet in length and weigh in at an astonishing 300 pounds—promises to be an unforgettable (and slightly terrifying) highlight. The island is part of Komodo National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site; access is controlled, and rangers patrol to ensure the safety of the many visitors.



The world’s largest lizard, the Komodo Dragon. Photo: Scott Baker

Komodo is arid, with rugged volcanic hills, open grasslands, and savanna woodland. It is one of the last strongholds of the critically endangered Yellow-crested Cockatoo, a bird that will be another priority for us. Others we are likely to observe include the Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Green Junglefowl, Green Imperial Pigeon (common), Lemon-bellied White-eye, and the Ornate, brown-throated, and Flame-breasted Sunbirds. There is also the chance in coastal areas of a Great-billed Heron or Beach Stone-Curlew.

On returning to Labuan Bajo in the afternoon, there will be time to relax or do some local birding as we look forward to an evening of fine dining and a celebratory beverage while we watch the sun set over the Flores Sea.

NIGHT: Puri Sari Beach Hotel, Labuan Bajo



Flame-breasted Sunbird. Photo: Scott Baker

May 31, Day 21: Return to Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia. Participants are free to depart Denpasar (airport code DPS) at any time today.

EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS: Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least two months prior to your departure date. We can easily make hotel arrangements, often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE REQUIREMENT: This tour visits remote locations where immediate access to primary medical care may **NOT** be available. **For this reason, travel**

insurance which covers you for emergency evacuation is required for participation on this tour. This coverage is included in the **Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™** program. Through Ripcord, “emergency evacuation” can be purchased as a stand-alone benefit or as part of a comprehensive travel insurance policy. If you choose not to purchase insurance through Ripcord, you are required to obtain it through another provider.

TOUR SIZE: This tour will be limited to 8 participants. However, if only one space is available, VENT reserves the right to raise the tour limit by one in order to accommodate a couple.

TOUR LEADER: Scott Baker, with a local leader TBA.



Scott Baker’s interest in wildlife began early, while growing up in the leafy outer suburbs of Melbourne, which retained significant tracts of natural woodland in an otherwise highly urbanized environment. Scott got his first pair of binoculars at the age of 11, beginning what was to become a lifetime quest to identify all the birds in an ever-expanding neighborhood. By the age of 15, he was conducting weekly bird walks and giving talks. A founding member of the very successful Yarran Dheran Junior Field Naturalists Club, in 1988 he was named Nunawading Young Citizen of the Year in recognition of his contributions to natural history and conservation. Pursuing his twinned interests in life science and fine

art, Scott went on to hold various roles in business, education, and environmental consultancy, facilitating opportunities to explore the wild places and wildlife of Australia and beyond. Over the past 30-plus years, he has travelled throughout the continent, with a major focus on its birds. He loves the rare and sometimes challenging cryptic birds, along with shorebirds and seabirds, having spent many days at sea. To date, he has recorded and photographed almost all of the regular and resident land birds and pelagic species likely to occur in Australia. Scott’s passion extends beyond birds, and he conducts studies and surveys of mammals, reptiles, and frogs. His fieldwork often involves nocturnal spotlighting sessions, requiring late nights and early mornings to maximize the tetrapod options. Scott is a well-regarded member of the Australian birding community, a moderator of several birdwatching forums and rare bird committees, and, since 2017, a leader of birdwatching and nature tours in Australia and southeast Asia. He currently resides in Victoria.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the main tour is **\$8875** per person in double occupancy from Denpasar. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 3 to breakfast on Day 21, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, includes internal flights (in economy class), gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Denpasar and return from Denpasar, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$645**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$1,000** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, the deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. If you would like to pay your deposit by check, money order, or bank transfer, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at <https://ventbird.com>) should be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

PAYMENTS: All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim December 11, 2024 prior to the tour departure date.

MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE REQUIREMENT: This tour visits remote locations where immediate access to primary medical care may **NOT** be available. **For this reason, travel insurance which covers you for emergency evacuation is required for participation on this tour.** This coverage is included in the **Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™** program. Through Ripcord, “emergency evacuation” can be purchased as a stand-alone benefit or as part of a comprehensive travel insurance policy. If you choose not to purchase insurance through Ripcord, you are required to obtain it through another provider.

EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES: In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS:

Cancellation by Participant:

Refunds, if any, for any cancellation by a participant are made according to the following schedule: If participant cancels 180 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$500** per person will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months from the date of participant tour cancellation, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$100** per person. If cancellation is made between 179 and 151 days before departure date, the deposit is not refundable, but any payments covering the balance of the tour fee will be refunded. If cancellation is made fewer than 150 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre- and post-tour extensions. **For participants’ protection, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance that covers trip cancellation/interruption.**

If participant cancels:

180 days or more before departure date
179 to 151 days before departure date

150 days or less before departure date

Participant’s refund will be:

Participant’s deposit minus \$500*
No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance of the tour fee will be refunded
No refund available

*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months from the date of participant tour cancellation, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$100 per person. To qualify, cancellation must occur 180 days or more before departure date; deposit transfers must be made at the time of cancellation; and one transfer per deposit.

Cancellation by VENT:

If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A “**Force Majeure**” event means any act beyond VENT’s control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labour stoppages, labour slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of

adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with Redpoint Travel Protection as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend its **Ripcord** plan. Designed for all types of travelers, Ripcord is among the most comprehensive travel protection programs available.

Critical benefits of Ripcord include a completely integrated program with a single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims; **medical evacuation from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice**; comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, primary medical expense coverage, death of pet, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or political or security reasons, waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents. *

For a price quote, or to purchase travel insurance, please visit:

<https://ripcordtravelprotection.com/ventbird>; or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help and Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 15 days of making your first trip payment. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, mid-payment, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The “pay as you go” approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to “pay as you go,” you must cover each deposit or payment within 15 days, and ensure all non-refundable trip cost in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

Coronavirus (COVID-19):

In line with the decision made by the federal government (including the CDC), Redpoint considers COVID-19 illness as any other seasonal respiratory illness. Providing only a positive Covid-19 test result will likely not be considered a covered event per the terms and conditions of the company's policy. Redpoint maintains a **Coronavirus FAQ** page on its website that addresses questions and concerns travelers may have regarding COVID-19 and Redpoint's policy. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of relevant topics.

Please visit the **Coronavirus FAQ** page at the following link:
https://redpointtravelprotection.com/covid_19_faq/.

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: \$50 domestic; \$75 international. * Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. **Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.**

*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

BAGGAGE:

The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your airline to find out specific weight restrictions. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security we recommend that you check the website of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for the most updated information: <http://www.tsa.gov/>.

We ask that you limit your baggage to one large duffel (or soft-sided suitcase) and one carry-on bag. On internal flights in Indonesia, a weight limit of 44 pounds (20 kg) is sometimes enforced. As a precaution against lost luggage, we suggest that you pack a change of clothes, essential toiletries, medications, important travel documents, optics, and any other essential items in your carry-on. When traveling, it is suggested that you wear clothing and a pair of shoes suitable for birding in case your baggage is delayed.

CONDITIONS: This is not a strenuous trip. Walking conditions are generally not difficult, but it is important to pay close attention to the terrain and to your footing. We will visit several important forest reserves on Sulawesi, Java, Komodo, Flores, and Bali, where we will stick to established roads and trails. There will be few, if any, really rigorous walks or uphill jaunts, but it is always possible to encounter mud, slippery surfaces, and stony ground. We will be on our feet for most of the time we are birding in the mornings and afternoons; thus, it is **MOST IMPORTANT** that your footwear provides suitable protection and support for your feet and ankles (read more below). A collapsible portable stool and a walking stick can be useful.

CLIMATE: We should expect a range of temperature and weather conditions over the course of the trip, with considerable variation from one day to the next. Generally, it will be deliciously cool in the morning hours and warm to hot in the afternoon. Temperatures will range from the 70s to the low 90s F. At night and in the early morning, it will be cooler in the hill forests and mountains of Sulawesi, Flores, and Bali; we recommend that you bring a sweater and other warm clothes for these destinations.

The Lesser Sundas tend to be dry rather than humid, but given that Indonesia is a tropical location, rain is always a possibility; precipitation usually takes the form of heavy but brief showers. However, at the time of our visit, rain is unlikely except in the mountains around Ruteng, Flores.

CLOTHING: As this trip combines birding in the field with leisure, you will want to pack a mix of clothing that prepares you for both activities. Dress will be casual. It is a good idea to wear dark, muted colors in the field, as this helps avoid spooking shy forest birds and mammals; please avoid light or bright colors.

Laundry service is available in most of the locations where we spend two nights.

The following items are recommended:

- **Field clothing:** Lightweight, dull-colored field clothing is recommended throughout the trip. This includes several pairs of pants and cool, comfortable long-sleeved shirts for protection from the sun and possibly mosquitoes. Outdoor stores such as Cabela's and REI carry field clothing that many birders find appealing. Pants and shirts made of lightweight, durable materials with multiple pockets and ventilated seams are popular.
- **Hats:** A dull-colored hat for protection from the sun is essential.
- **Pants and shorts:** Many people prefer lightweight pants made of cotton or other material, but denim is certainly acceptable. A pair or two of shorts will be desirable for rest breaks in the middle of the day.
- **Shirts:** Several t-shirts (long- and short-sleeved) in addition to other comfortable styles suitable for warm weather.
- **Socks:** Long socks make it possible to tuck in your pants hems and further avoid biting insects.
- **Swimwear:** A swimming suit is useful if we can squeeze in some snorkeling at Komodo or Bali, and some hotels have a swimming pool.
- **Sweaters and coats:** Warm weather will be the rule on this trip, but a sweater, light coat, or jacket will come in handy in highland locations such as Tomohon (Sulawesi), Ruteng (Flores), and Bedugul (Bali) some mornings and evenings.
- **Raingear:** Raingear is always essential in the Indonesian tropics, with an umbrella or light-weight poncho very useful.
- **Footwear:** As we will be out in the field for much of the morning and afternoon, it is very important that you have suitable protection and support for your feet and ankles. Light-weight boots of Gore-Tex or a similar material that come up to the ankle and have a good lug sole are ideal. Many people worry that these boots will be too heavy; they are not. The protection, grip, and day-long comfort such boots afford make them superior to sneakers and training shoes. You may also prefer sandals or tennis shoes for the time in between birding and the evening.

CURRENCY: The official currency of Indonesia is the Indonesian Rupiah (IDR). **Please be sure that your US bills are in good condition (unmarked, unfolded, and undamaged in any way), or the exchange office may refuse to accept them.**

You can check the latest conversion rate at xe.com. While US dollars MIGHT be accepted in large cities and shops, it is always convenient to have a supply of both US dollars and Indonesian rupiah (IDR) for taxi rides, gifts, laundry, meals and refreshments on your own, and any other personal items. Small denominations are always best, as it is easier for individuals and businesses to make change. Should you extend your time in Indonesia beyond what is offered in the itinerary, you should strongly consider obtaining local currency. ATM machines can be found in large cities, such as Jakarta, but only sparingly in some towns. American Express, Visa, and MasterCard credit cards are accepted in hotels and better restaurants in the major cities, but may not be accepted in smaller restaurants and shops. Please check with your bank and credit card issuer for more information about banking and the use of ATM and credit cards overseas.

DOCUMENTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure is required for United States citizens, with at least two blank pages for entry stamps. A "Visa-On-Arrival" can be obtained directly when you land at the airport in Manado or Denpasar. This costs US \$35 for a 30-day tourist visa and is processed at the point of entry. Go to the U.S Department of State, Bureau of Consumer Affairs for up-to-date information:

travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html. Citizens of countries other than the US

should check with the appropriate consulates or embassies.

FOOD AND WATER: Away from major hotels, all raw food is subject to contamination. Particularly in areas where hygiene and sanitation are inadequate, travelers should avoid salads, uncooked vegetables, and unpasteurized milk and milk products such as cheese, and eat only food that has been cooked and is still hot or fruit that has been peeled by the traveler personally. Cooked food that has been allowed to stand for several hours can be a fertile medium for bacterial growth, so if you sample local delicacies from a street vendor, be sure that the food is cooked in front of you. Drink only bottled or boiled water and canned or bottled beverages. Avoid drinks with ice. If a can or bottle has been in ice, be sure to dry it off before drinking from the container.

EQUIPMENT: One of the most important aspects of an enjoyable travel experience is the proper equipment. The following items will come in handy during your trip to Indonesia:

- Backpack – Good for carrying extra clothing, field guides, supplies, and optical equipment. A waterproof backpack or a supply of plastic bags will help prevent passports and electrical items from getting wet in heavy rain.
- Notebooks and pens.
- Travel alarm clock or mobile phone alarm clock (essential).
- Polarized sunglasses with good UV protection.
- Sunscreen, lip balm, skin lotions – Essential for any trip to the tropics, especially this trip, where UV radiation can cause sunburn remarkably quickly.
- Personal toiletries – Including spare glasses or contact lenses.
- Umbrella – A small collapsible umbrella is easy to carry and useful both against rain and sun.
- Cameras, lenses, film, memory cards, and extra batteries – UV and polarizing filters are recommended.
- Plastic bags – Plastic bags are very useful to protect equipment from rain and dust.
- Collapsible walking stick – Highly recommended for those who need assistance with balance on trails.
- Tissue packs, handy wipes, and hand sanitizer.
- Water bottle.
- Flashlight or headlamp – We may be out at night on a few occasions, and a small flashlight or headlamp may also be helpful for moving around your room at night.
- Binoculars: We strongly recommend good 8x42, 10x40, or 10x42 binoculars.
- Spotting scopes: Your tour leader will have a scope available for group use throughout the trip. However, you are welcome and encouraged to bring your own if it is important to you.

HEALTH: At the time of publication, no vaccinations are required for entry into Indonesia. VENT follows Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which include vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations.

If you are taking prescription or over-the-counter medicines, be sure to bring an ample supply to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

Temperatures in Indonesia are warm throughout the year. You should be prepared to spend several hours outdoors in temperatures that may reach into the 90s F, with high humidity. Participants should be active and in a good state of health to participate fully in this tour. A serious health emergency in Indonesia may require an air evacuation.

Most excursions involve a fair amount of standing and quite a bit of walking, occasionally over rough

or wet ground and sometimes uphill. Adequate mobility is essential.

The sun's ultraviolet rays can be dangerous on prolonged exposure (sometimes only a matter of minutes). Anytime you are outdoors you should protect your skin, including your lips, eyes, nose, and ears. Severe sunburn can be very painful and will affect your level of enjoyment. Always protect yourself when outdoors, and be sure to bring an ample supply of high-SPF sunscreen and lip balm. We also strongly recommend the use of ultra-violet blocking, polarized sunglasses.

Although we expect mild sea conditions on the boat ride between Labuan Bajo and Komodo, passengers should be prepared for the possibility of challenging seas. We recommend that you consult your physician about appropriate motion medication.

COVID-19: We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying "Up to Date" with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance regarding recommendations for avoiding COVID-19. Please visit the **Coronavirus Travel Update** page of our website <https://ventbird.com/covid-19> for our official statement regarding COVID-19 and the operation of our tours. Please visit the CDC website for the most up to date information about COVID-19 and associated guidance for proper health and hygiene: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

INSECTS: Mosquitoes, sandflies, and other biting insects are only rarely a problem on this tour. Insect problems are best dealt with by wearing long trousers tucked into long socks and long-sleeved shirts of sufficient thickness and density of weave that the "bugs" cannot bite through.

LEECHES: Leeches may be encountered in Way Kambas but are rare to non-existent elsewhere.

Insect Repellents – There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

Insect repellents for the skin are commonly available in three forms:

- DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions, time-release preparations, and disposable wipes. The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.
- Picaridin: A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.
- Herbal insect repellents: Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

An insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- Permanone® (Permethrin) is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for **pre-treatment** of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to complete and must be done outdoors, so is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment has to be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.

- Insect Shield® apparel: Clothing pre-treated with Permethrin is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

The US EPA offers a search tool to help choose a repellent that is best for a particular situation. For example, some repellents work for mosquitoes, but not for ticks.

<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/which-insect-repellent-right-you>

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). You can check the CDC website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html> (click on Travel Health).

INTERNET: WIFI is available at all of the hotels on the tour, but the connection may be unstable at Ruteng and in Flores and Tangkoko.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION:

ELECTRICITY: Electricity at hotels in Indonesia is 220V (50/60 hertz), with recessed outlets of the three-pin, rectangular-blade British type G. To use American standard 110V equipment with the flat-pronged plugs, a converter as well as an adapter plug will be required. **The electricity supply at Tangkoko Lodge is unstable, and power may be unavailable for air conditioning in the rooms during the afternoon break.**

LANGUAGE: There are about 300 native ethnicities in Indonesia, speaking 742 different languages and dialects. The official language of Indonesia is Bahasa, a form of Malay.

PERSONAL SECURITY: During the tour, it is always a good idea to lock your bags when possible and to leave your valuables in the hotel safe or carry them on your person.

TIME: Indonesia sprawls across three different time zones. At the time of this tour, the part of Indonesia where we will spend most of our time is 12 hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). Jakarta is 11 hours ahead of EDT.

SUGGESTED READING: A number of traditional booksellers and online stores carry excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources to help prepare you for this tour. We recommend www.amazon.com, which has a wide selection; www.buteobooks.com and www.nhbs.com, which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and www.abebooks.com for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

The most important field guides for this trip:

Eaton, James A., et al. 2021. *Birds of the Indonesian Archipelago*. Lynx Edicions.

Finally, the long-awaited complete field guide to the birds of the Greater Sunda and Wallacea; well-illustrated, with concise text and up-to-date taxonomy. Definitely *the* book for this tour. Please note that this book has split many species, illustrated several wholly new species, and rebrand many birds with new names to better reflect their relationships.

MacKinnon, John, and Phillipps, Karen. 1994. *A Field Guide to the Birds of Borneo, Sumatra, Java and Bali*. Oxford UP.

Very useful in Sumatra, Java, and Bali, with some limited carry-over to Sulawesi and Flores, but now very much out of date.

Other Field Guides:

Caulfield, C. 1986. *In the Rainforest: Report from a Strange, Beautiful, Imperiled World*. U Chicago P.

Das, Indraneil. 2010. *A Field Guide to the Reptiles of South-East Asia: Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Peninsular Malaysia, Singapore, Sumatra, Borneo, Java, Bali*. New Holland.

An absolutely superb field guide covering all of the reptiles found in the areas above, many of which are also found in the area this tour visits.

Daws, Gavan, and Marty Fujita. 1999. *Archipelago: The Islands of Indonesia from the Nineteenth-Century Discoveries of Alfred Russell Wallace to the Fate of Forests and Reefs in the Twenty-First Century*. California UP.

A simply stunning coffee table book. Will make you want to go everywhere in Indonesia!

Diamond, J. M. 1997. *Guns, Germs and Steel*. W. W. Norton & Company.

This Pulitzer Prize-winning book should be compulsory reading for every man, woman, and child on our planet.

Delahunty, B., et al. 2007. *Lonely Planet Travel Guide: Indonesia*. 8th ed. Lonely Planet.

McNeely, Jeffrey A., and Paul Spencer Sochaczewski. 1995. *Soul of the Tiger: Searching for Nature's Answers in Exotic Southeast Asia*. U Hawaii P.

Strange, Morten. 2003. *A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Indonesia*. Princeton UP.

The following is a small selection of titles from the excellent contemporary literature about Indonesia, including its natural history and its wildlife.

Turner, Peter. 1998. *Lonely Planet Travel Guide: Indonesia's Eastern Islands*. Lonely Planet Publications.

Richards, P.W. 1981. *The Tropical Rain Forest*. Cambridge UP.

Wallace, A.R. 1962. *The Malay Archipelago*. Rev. ed. Dover Publications.

Still the best book written on the natural history of this region, and a fascinating account of Wallace's explorations.

White, C.M.N., and M.D. Bruce. 1986. *The Birds of Wallacea: An Annotated Checklist*. British Ornithologists' Union.

Whitmore, T.C. 1984. *Tropical Rain Forests of the Far East*. Oxford UP.

Whitmore, T.C. 1977. *Palms of Malaya*. 2nd ed. Oxford UP.

TIPPING: Tipping (restaurant staff, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that tips are not expected and are entirely optional. Tips should be given directly to your tour leader; they should not be sent to the VENT office.

RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc., a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, “*VENT*”) act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on publication and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant’s Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant’s risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the “*Airline*”) is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline’s aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

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