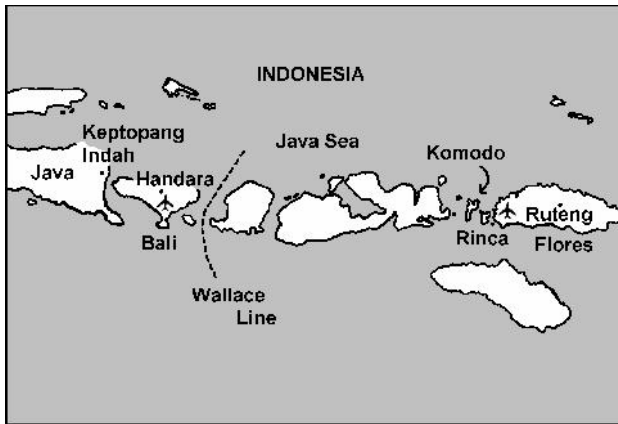


# BALI, JAVA, FLORES AND KOMODO

*birding across the Wallace line*



Working in parallel, Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace developed the theory of evolution. While Darwin's theories began on Galapagos, Wallace's activities centred on Indonesia, where he collected specimens for British museums. Wallace noticed that the distribution of creatures from Asia extended south as far as Java and Bali. Although many had evolved far enough to become different species, they remained firmly allied to Asian families.

Leaving Bali, Wallace crossed the Lombok Strait, a distance of just 35 miles, and noticed a dramatic change. The creatures east of this line, such as on Flores and Komodo, have Australian ancestry. Wallace found cockatoos and friarbirds, whilst the bulbuls and woodpeckers had been left behind in Java and Bali.

Like Galapagos, each of the islands we will visit has its own unique fauna and flora. Some, like the Javan White-eye or Javan Plover, differ very little from their close relatives. Others, like the Javan Kingfisher and Bali Starling, are striking in their differences. The Dragons of Komodo recall a time past. A time when giant lizards roamed the earth. These prehistoric leviathans are not out of place among the dramatic volcanic islets here.

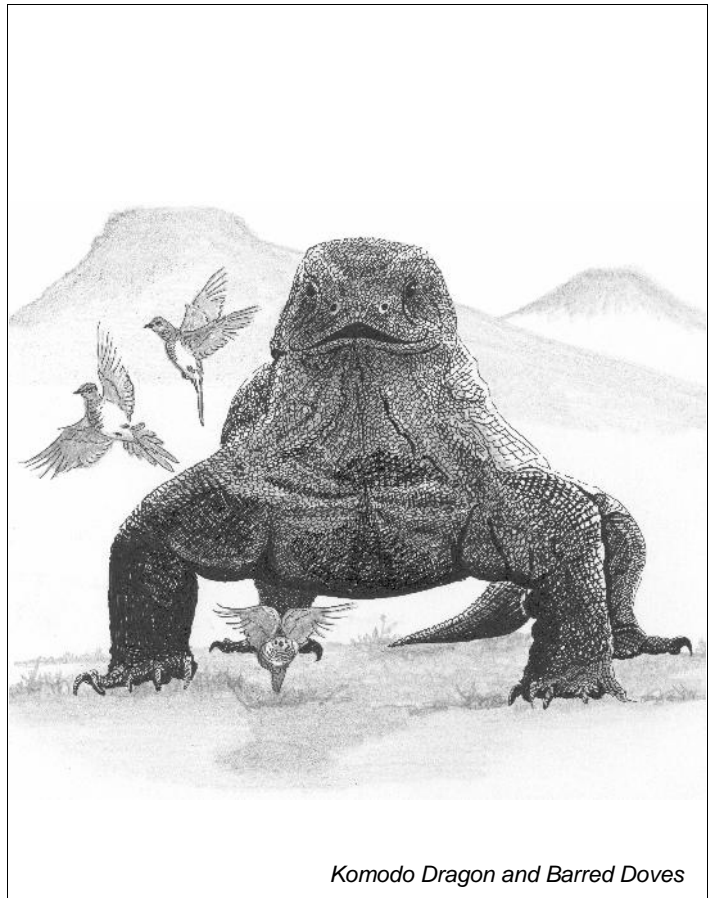
Today, Wallace is a hero celebrated by naturalists who named many species after him. The endemic Wallace's Hanging-parrot, Wallace's Scops Owl and Wallacean Drongo are amongst the many species we hope to see. The first half of our tour is spent looking for endemic birds on Bali and Java. The most iconic of these is the Bali Starling, of which only a handful of wild birds survive. Then a short flight across the Wallace Line takes us to Flores, with its own charm, isolation and endemics. From here, we will visit Komodo and Rinca: both UNESCO sites where *'there be dragons!'*

## ITINERARY

### BALI AND JAVA

Our flight from the UK takes us to Bali, a beautiful Pacific island topped with volcanic peaks and scattered with temples. As you would expect of this destination, the infrastructure is very good, with quality hotels and a network of good roads that allow us to explore the island.

From the airport we will drive to Bedugul, passing coastal lagoons which hold Small Blue Kingfisher and Javan Pond Heron, before arriving at Bali Handara Kosaido for our first night. Our hotel is nestled inside the crater of an extinct volcano. The following morning we will find mountain birds in



*Komodo Dragon and Barred Doves*

abundance, many of which are endemic. Flame-fronted Barbet, Blood-breasted Flowerpecker, Javan Owlet, Indonesian Honeyeater, Yellow-throated Hanging Parrot and Grey-cheeked Green Pigeon all occur here.

In the afternoon, we will descend from the Central Highlands to reach the coast at Bali Barat National Park, our base for the next two nights. Here we have a full day birding in search of Javan Kingfisher, Javan Plover, Javan Banded Pitta and Green Junglefowl. Two members of the starling family here are critically endangered and this is the best place in the world to see them. On Bali, the Black-winged Starling is found only in this park. Despite being much rarer, the Bali Starling is

easier to locate due to its colour. This snow-white bird has a blue face and long crest, but its beauty led to its demise. In 2006 only six wild birds were left! A concerted effort has increased the number to about 50, but it remains one of the rarest birds in the world.

On day five we will take a short ferry to East Java where we will spend two nights at Ketapang. Here we will be birding at Baluran National Park and Ijen Nature Reserve, two of the best places to find Javanese endemics. The forest holds Pink-headed Fruit Dove, Sunda Minivet, Black-banded Barbet, White-crowned Forktail, Sunda Bush-warbler, Sunda Warbler, Ruddy Cuckoo-dove, Dark-backed Imperial Pigeon, and Grey-cheeked Tit-babbler; all watched over by the Javan Hawk-eagle.

### FLORES, KOMODO AND RINCA

After a second morning of birding in Java, we cross back to Bali and head to Denpasar, ready for our flight to Flores. Arriving at Labuhan Bajo in Flores, part of the Lesser Sunda archipelago, we will check into our hotel for three nights and do a little local birding that afternoon. This region is well known for its volcanic activity; Krakatoa lies along the same chain of islands, a thousand miles to the west. The setting is wonderful, with palm-fringed beaches and golden sunsets over triangular peaks. However, this beauty hides terror, for the following day, we go in search of dragons.

Komodo and Rinca are two small volcanic islands where the Komodo Dragon has been isolated for millennia. Taking a boat trip to these islands is one of the world's greatest wildlife experiences. As will meander through coastal waters that resemble a *Lost World* film set we can watch Black-naped Terns and piratic Lesser Frigatebirds. Once ashore we can expect close views (not too close though) of the Komodo Dragon. Wardens ensure our safety, since the dragons sleep with one eye open.

Barred Doves are alert to Variable Goshawks, while White-bellied Sea-eagles soar above the cone-shaped peaks. Being remote, these islands still hold good populations of birds and animals that have suffered severe declines elsewhere. With ten percent of the world population of the critically endangered Yellow-crested Cockatoo on these two tiny islands, we must be alert to their calls. Orange-footed Scrubfowl feed around groups of Timor Deer. Slight regional differences to some of the common birds make the possibility of seeing an undescribed species here very real.

The next day we will birdwatch at the west end of Flores, which has a very different feel to Bali. Flores is less developed and certainly not as touristy as Bali. We will birdwatch along the Potowangka Road where we will look for endemics including Flores Minivet, Flores Leaf-warbler and Flores Green Pigeon, a species often difficult to see.

At this time of year, migration has just begun and raptors follow the island chain towards Australia. This is a major route for Chinese Sparrowhawk, Oriental Honey-buzzard and Black Baza. We should also be mindful that the recently described Flores Hawk-eagle could pass overhead at any time.

We will then head to Ruteng in the Flores interior, for two nights, birding along the way. The volcanic landscape is painted with terraces of rice paddies and woodland patches. Along the road, we have a chance of finding Wallace's Hanging Parrots feeding in fruiting trees. The Wallacean Drongo and Wallace's Scops Owl, that commemorate the great man's name, also live here.

Birding in the Puarlodo forest should produce the stunning Flores Monarch and perhaps, with patience, an Elegant Pitta.

We will visit Danau Rana Mese where we will look for the splendid White-rumped Kingfisher. We should also find the Great-billed Parrot, Brown Quail and endemic Golden-rumped and Black-breasted Flowerpeckers.

Finally, we will return to Labuhan Bajo, for one night, in advance of our flight back to the UK.

### CLIMATE AND PACE

It is likely to be hot and sunny throughout this itinerary, but with a small chance of rain. At higher elevations it should be a little cooler. Breakfast will be taken at about 6.30am most mornings to take advantage of the cooler morning period. Basic fitness is all that is required. Full days will be spent in the field and reasonable length walks will be undertaken regularly. There are some uneven paths and some uphill walks, all taken at a gentle pace.

### ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD

Full-board accommodation is provided, with one night at the Bali Handara Kosaido Resort, Bali, two nights at the Adi Assri Resort, Bali, two nights at the Ketapang Indah, Java, one night at the Harris Tuban Hotel, Bali, three nights at the Jaya Karta Hotel, Labuhan Bajo, Flores, two nights at the Ruteng Seminary Mission, Flores, one night back at the Jaya Karta Hotel, Labuhan Bajo, Flores. All hotels are of a good standard. The Mission at Ruteng has rooms that are rather plain, but nevertheless clean and comfortable. All rooms are en suite. Lunch will normally be at restaurants, but occasionally we will take a packed lunch.

### PRICE INCLUDES .....

All birdwatching excursions with expert leader and local guide, full-board accommodation (starting with dinner on 3<sup>rd</sup>, ending with breakfast on 15<sup>th</sup>), soft drinks at meal times, bottled water throughout, transport by minibus, boat trip, reserve entrance fees, ferry, domestic flights and international flights.

### WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED

Travel insurance. Cost of obtaining a visa (approx. £20 and obtainable on arrival in Bali). Personal items, alcoholic drinks, laundry.

### INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

Flights from London Heathrow to Bali (via Singapore), using the scheduled services of Singapore Airlines. Outbound flight departs early afternoon, return arrives back late afternoon. There is a nine hour stop over in Singapore on the return journey, where it is possible to get a hotel room in the transit area (without clearing customs). **It is also possible to fly from Manchester and other UK airports.**

<b>14 nights</b> including two overnight flights:	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> August 2015</b>
<b>Principal leader:</b>	<b>Phil Palmer</b>
<b>Local guide:</b>	<b>Hery Kusumanegara and other wardens/rangers</b>
<b>Maximum group size:</b>	<b>10 clients with one leader and local guides</b>
<b>Cost with discount (if you book before 19<sup>th</sup> April 2015):</b>	<b>£4680 per person sharing (£260 single supplement)</b>
<b>Full Cost:</b>	<b>£4830 per person sharing</b>
<b>Deposit:</b>	<b>£600 per person</b>

