

Trip report: Lombok and Sumba, Indonesia (03/08/2019 – 10/08/2019)

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I would like to go birding with Sir Alfred Russel Wallace because he seems like a cool guy, but he's dead. Thankfully, that desire can be replaced by birding in the region named after him. This report puts together details from my first ever trip to Wallacea that I embarked on together with three other hardcore birders. We birded Lombok independently for two days and then Sumba for the rest of the trip with the help of a coordinator and several local guides. (Please contact me directly for information such as quoted rates etc.)

Main Locations Birded

Lombok: Krandangan National Park

Sumba: Lewa, Billa, Yumbu Grasslands



Sumba Myzomela at Sumba

Itinerary

3 August	Arrive at Lombok Travel to accommodation at Krandangan National Park
4 August	Birding at Krandangan National Park
5 August	Birding at Krandangan National Park Travel to Lombok Airport
6 August	Morning flight from Lombok to Sumba via Bali Travel to accommodation at Lewa Evening-night birding at Lewa
7 August	Morning birding at Lewa Travel to Billa Evening-night birding at Billa
8 August	Birding at Billa
9 August	Birding at Billa Travel to Waingapu
10 August	Morning birding at Yumbu Grasslands Depart Sumba

Planning the trip

The main course of our trip was to experience Wallacean birding in Sumba, but the four of us were arriving from three separate countries and the lack of direct flights to the island was a troublemaker. We hence decided to meet at Lombok first for some appetiser. My flight to Lombok was quite straightforward because I [arrived from Bali](#). We did not ascend Mount Rinjani in search for the Sunset Lorikeet *mitchelli* among the various other targets and only visited the Krandangan National Park area.

We referred to reports from [Budget Birders](#) and [Suana et al.](#).

For Sumba, we engaged a coordinator who helped manage the logistics and planning of the trip. The ever-reliable and detailed [Burung Nusantara](#) helped us familiarise ourselves with the rough sites of the island although our coordinator planned the itinerary for us. We are also grateful to Elize Ng for sharing her knowledge and private trip reports with us.

Field Guide used: Eaton, J. A., van Balen, S., Brickle, N. W., & Rheindt, F. E. (2016). Birds of the Indonesian Archipelago: Greater Sundas and Wallacea. Lynx.

This report follows the IOC 10.1 nomenclature and potential splits are in brackets, or with the subspecies listed.

General Logistics

Lombok

SIM Card

SIM cards were sold at the international airport at Lombok. I did not purchase one as I had an overseas telecom plan, but my friends did. I embarrassingly forgot to take note of the rates but they felt reasonable. The SIM cards worked in Sumba during the later section of our trip as well.

Accommodation

3 – 5 August, Airbnb: The Country House Kerandangan, Sunbirds Choir by Yanto

A superb Airbnb that was pretty luxurious by our standards. Breakfasts, usually served at normal human hours, were specially packed for us because we left the accommodation before dawn on both mornings. Not only was the Airbnb literally right outside Kerandangan National Park, there were multiple **Rinjani Scops Owls** within the compound. Yes, multiple.

Transport

We used the Gojek ride hailing app to travel from Lombok airport to our accommodation. The cost was 215,000 IDR and the ride was 1 hour long.

Taxis were abundant in the town of Sengigi (where Kerandangan National Park is) that we took to travel from town to our accommodation. The Bluebird Taxis were metered.

We also used the Bluebird Taxi to return from the accommodation to the airport (which our host helped to book – there are no taxis around the National Park area itself) that cost 275,000 IDR.

Our flight from Lombok to Sumba had a short stopover at Bali.

Food

Breakfasts were provided by our Airbnb. We purchased bread, canned food and snacks for lunch that we ate in the field.

Food choices near the accommodation was severely limited and we had to travel to the town/beach area of Sengigi (just 3 km or so from the national park) for dinner. It was very touristy and had lots of bars and restaurants; we ate at one of such for our first dinner as we struggled to find local stalls within walking distance. For our two subsequent dinners, we asked taxi drivers for recommendations and were brought to the same location (GPS: -8.557886, 116.074832) by two different drivers on both nights. Rumah Makan Taliwang Nada Alam Nyaman, the shop on the south, was not bad (try the Ayam Taliwang, a Lombok specialty). Rumah Makan Taliwang Bintaro Jaya, the shop on the north, was not only slow and expensive but also very disappointing. During the drive to this place we passed by many other eateries, and I recommend just stopping by somewhere that looks nice rather than travelling all the way to the tourist trap.

Weather

Our trip to Wallacea was specifically planned for the dry season (typically peaking around July) and we did not experience any wet weather in Lombok.

Safety

Health: Malaria still exists on both Lombok and Sumba although the risks were apparently low at least as of August 2019. We decided to take precautions anyway (but were later told by a Lombok resident who happened to be a medical doctor that we were overthinking the situation). One from my group took Mefloquine and experienced (bad) side effects. Two took doxycycline – one had mild side effects at the beginning, another towards the end (quick note: please do not take Doxycycline right before bed). I took Malarone and was fine. Although our visit was during the dry season, there were still some mosquitoes around puddles and urban area on both islands. I am just noting down our experience so please conduct your own research/check with your guides and doctors for recommendations. Some of the medicines apparently require a week worth of dose to take full effect so do take note.

Sumba

Guide

We engaged Oki Hidayat who helped us to coordinate the logistics and planning – vehicle and driving, accommodation, contacting local guides – of the trip. He brought along an assistant (a boy scout) who helped us prepare our tents and food as well as watch our belongings while we birded.

For the Lewa section, we engaged a ranger from the Matalawa National Park (whose name I have forgotten) for an evening and a morning.

At Billa, we engaged a local guide called Umbu Mias (Umbu being the salutation in the Sumba language for “Mr”) and he was absolutely fantastic. Not only was he installed with the latest human GPS software to navigate the forested labyrinth, he also had an impeccable sense of acoustic triangulation and sight that helped us find countless birds. I would strongly recommend somehow engaging him when making a visit to the Billa area.

Accommodation

6 – 7 August, Lewa

We stayed at a famous local guest house in the village of Lewapaku at (GPS: -9.703929, 119.883747). This local guest house is used by most (perhaps all?) birding trips to the area and was clearly heavily endorsed by Birdtour Asia as photographs of the Sumba endemics were pasted on every door. Mosquitoes were present but there were nets that kept the pests out at night. There was mobile signal.

7 – 9 August, Billa

For Billa, the initial plan was to stay at a homestay at a nearby village, but we were unable to do so due to the schedule clashes with another birding group. Hence, we camped at GPS: -9.968222, 120.079639 for two nights. On hindsight, camping was far better than staying at the village as we did not have to conduct the daily drive in and out of the forest and were instead able to conveniently bird without being restrained by time. The occasional screams from the Orange-footed Scrubfowls in the middle of the night was worth the cold. There were neither mosquitoes nor mobile signal throughout the Billa area.

9 – 10 August, Waingapu: Sandlewood Hotel

We had some trouble finding an accommodation on our last night at Waingapu. Our coordinator booked a hotel called Sacca Residence & Restro, but the hotel had a not-so-smart policy of sending a confirmation WhatsApp message two days before the booking. Obviously, a reply could not be sent from the signal proof forest and our room was therefore transferred to others. We thereafter drove around town to find a proper hotel and eventually stayed at Sandlewood Hotel.

Transport

Our coordinator secured a 4WD pick-up truck. The drive from Waingapu to the Lewa accommodation was about 1 hour 20 minutes, and from there to the campsite it was about 2 hour 30 minutes. The drive back from the campsite to Waingapu was about 3 hours.

Food

At Waingapu, we visited Mr Café (GPS: -9.654273, 120.266746) twice and food was quite good. For Lewa, there was a stall right across the accommodation where we purchased our dinner.

We stocked up on rice, noodles, snacks and drinks at a shop in Lewa before our journey to Billa. While camping, the boy scout helped prepare our (super delicious!) meals with our stockpile and random vegetables that he found in the forest together with the local guide.

Weather

Despite it being the dry season, our evenings in Billa were cloudy and we experienced a short bout of rain on one afternoon. The weather was otherwise similar to Lombok.

Birding

Lombok

Krandangan National Park



The entrance fee to Krandangan National Park was 100,000 IDR per person per day. The kind ranger allowed us to enter the national park on our first evening and the second day using the same ticket. Birding was very straightforward and we just walked along the main trail. The “wild watching (bird)” trail which entrance was right behind the park HQ was destroyed and inaccessible. The trail beyond the “Air Terjun/Waterfall Goa Walet” area was in poor condition as well and we did not go beyond that. The habitat was similar throughout the park anyway. There was a lookout tower at GPS: - 8.470601, 116.061997 that offered canopy level views of the surroundings.

Our main targets here included the Elegant Pitta *concinna*, Wallacean Drongo (apparently distinct and split as Lombok Spangled Drongo) and Rinjani Scops Owl.

Elegant Pitta was common by call throughout the park but finding the bird in the thickets was difficult. The slightly more open area around the campsite (quite near the HQ, turn left at the first fork) was where we eventually managed to get our diagnostic views. Wallacean Drongo, supposedly a common bird, was quiet throughout the trip and we did not manage to find any. On one morning we walked into an **Orange-footed Scrubfowl** crossing the trail right after the HQ as well.



Orange-footed Scrubfowl

Finally, **Rinjani Scops Owl** was surprisingly easy for us. The ranger allowed us to enter the national park on our first night and we soon found one at the first bridge across the stream. Later that night we encountered at least three more in our accommodation and there really was no need to enter the park. Apart from the other common birds, bird activity in the national park was quite poor and the number of days we allocated was more than sufficient.

Ricefields

We got bored of the rather birdless national park quickly and on our first evening we got our Airbnb hosts to book a Bluebird Taxi for us. We did not want to travel too far from the accommodation and were also short on time, so we got our driver to drive around the rice fields in the region, in blind hope of somehow finding a Tawny-breasted Parrotfinch or some other nice grassland birds. We stopped briefly around GPS: -8.556658, 116.074607 and GPS: -8.556579, 116.077313 and found **Scaly-breasted, Javan** and **Pale-headed Munias** but dipped on the Black-faced and Five-coloured Munias. The superb taxi driver was very generous and stopped his meter for us when we hopped off his vehicle to spazzed over the tiny flying animals.

Sumba

Lewa

At Lewa we mostly did roadside birding at the Langgaliru and Tanadaru area with the help of a local ranger who knew the sites. The park HQ was at GPS: -9.680871, 119.853822 and entrance fee was 150,000 IDR per person per day. Detailed descriptions of this frequented birding area can be found on [Burung Nusantara](#).

Langgaliru

Birding was mainly along the forest spanning across GPS: -9.673619, 119.852129 to GPS: -9.651348, 119.829390. There were multiple random trails (?) into the forests along the road that we entered. These trails were actually barely marked as the sparse understorey of the forest made the entire place accessible. Some places we entered showed up as streams on Google Maps and the terrain did resemble riverbeds but were completely dry.

On our first evening, prior to owling, we made a brief stop around GPS: -9.657857, 119.831661 and successfully found a **Red-naped Fruit Dove**. We managed to secure both endemic owls within the next few hours – **Sumba Boobook** and **Little Sumba Hawk-owl** – at the forest patch around this area on our first night at Sumba. Sunset was around 1815.

On our first morning we begun from GPS: -9.659658 119.843410 and birded by walking about 2 kilometres towards the west. This site was supposed to offer some nice views of the grassland but a fire apparently broke out just two days before our arrival and the area was scorched. Sumba/regional endemic (sub)species performed well – **Blood-breasted (Sumba) Flowerpecker**, **Apricot-breasted Sunbird**, **Pale-shouldered Cicadabird**, **Rusty-breasted Whistler**, **Russet-backed Jungle Flycatcher**, **Marigold Lorikeet**, **Red-cheeked Parrot** and (faraway) **Sumba Hornbills** – were among the birds we saw within 90 minutes of birding.

After a successful start, we visited several short (~50 metres) trails (?) along the forest to look for the **Elegant Pitta maria**. We managed to hear at least one at every single roadside stop and they were probably all over the forest. However, getting views proved to be excruciatingly difficult. These birds seemed to fly to canopy level in response to a call, and only after a short while did they identify as a Pitta by coming down low to the ground. During the painful process we were rewarded with two superb by-catches – a point blank view of a **Sumba Hornbill**, that for some inexplicable reason decided to perch on in front of us before freaking out and flying off; and a **Chestnut-backed Thrush** that also flew in silently and hopped around for a short while.



Sumba Hornbill

Tanadaru

The drive from Langgaliru to Tanadaru was about 25 minutes. We stopped at GPS: -9.648893, 119.706734 and our main target here was the **Sumba Myzomela** (cover photo) which we saw within a minute. During our brief birding here, we also saw **Brown Goshawk**, **Cinereous Tit**, **Little (Eucalypt) Cuckoo-dove** and **Red-cheeked Parrot** among others.

Billa

The national park HQ (I think?) was at GPS: -9.963585, 120.055000 and entrance fee was 150,000 IDR per person per day. The birding experience here was superior to Lewa – no traffic to impede ear birding, minimal human infrastructure, just beautiful and pristine forests. While those short on time might be deterred from making the long drive to this less visited site, the journey is certainly worth it for those who are able to make it.

Birding here was mainly along the trails around our campsite at GPS: -9.968222, 120.079639. Our local guide, Umbu Mias, knew the forests and its inhabitants inside out brought us to various sites upon request. We birded this site for effectively two days (one evening, a full day, and one short morning) and managed to clean up the other endemics of Sumba excluding the Sumba Buttonquail.

Campground

Flocks of **Marigold Lorikeets** and **Sumba Hornbills** were visible from the campground in the evenings, with **Great-billed Parrots** flying by occasionally. One **Eclectus Parrot** also gave us poor but diagnosable views. **Mees's Nightjar** also flew around the campground clearing at dusk.

Pied Bush Chat, Barred Dove, Rusty-breasted Whistler Indonesian Honeyeater and **Yellow-ringed White-eyes** were among the other birds we saw within the campground.

Hilltop

We hiked to a hilltop lookout point at GPS: -9.974083, 120.078278 on our first morning in search for the endemic Cockatoo. The other species of parrots, and more **Sumba Hornbills**, made regular flybys but we were only able to get one faraway and slightly disappointing view of the **Yellow-crested (Orange-crested) Cockatoo**. However later that day, while walking around the forests, we managed to get good views of a flock of eight cockatoos about 1.2km south of our campsite.

Forest

Apart from the above sites, providing detailed birding information of the site will be difficult because we pretty much just walked around the forest for the entire day, not getting lost thanks to the guidance of Umbu Mias. There were no specific sites for the targets. Both the **Sumba Brown Flycatcher** and **Sumba Flycatcher** were found within 100 metres of our tent, although we struggled a lot to find the latter and it was only 30 minutes before departing Billa that we finally managed to nail one. Other targets such as the **Wallacean (Sumba Spangled) Drongo** and **Sumba Green Pigeons** were chance encounters. The dried-up agricultural land around GPS: -9.964892 120.076222 provided good views of **Tenggara Swiftlets** and **Black-faced Munias**.

Night birding

Birding around the forests at night produced both endemic owls as well as multiple roosting birds including three sleeping **Elegant Pittas maria**.



Little Sumba Hawk-owl

Yumbu Grasslands

The main target here was the endemic Sumba Buttonquail. We arrived and parked the vehicle at GPS: -9.650841, 120.393400 slightly before 0600 in hope of finding nocturnal birds but there were none. After a short breakfast, we started walking the near-barren southern field around 0617 once it got bright.

Our mission was accomplished by 0622 when a pair of tiny **Sumba Buttonquails** ran around in front of me. Their occasional pauses allowed us to get the views that we desired.



Sumba Buttonquail

Other birds we encountered in the field included **Horsfield's Bush Lark, Spotted Kestrel, Spotted Harrier** and many **Zebra Finches**.

Wetland

We also visited a wetland at GPS: -9.691963, 120.495510 for about an hour. Here, we hoped to find Five-coloured Munias and Red Avadavats but dipped on both. However, we did manage to add to our plateauing list the **White-shouldered Triller, Pacific Black Duck, Common Moorhen** and **Australian Reed Warbler**.

Systematic List of Birds

94 species seen, 1 heard only

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows Gill F, D Donsker & P Rasmussen (Eds). 2020. IOC World Bird List (v10.1). doi : 10.14344/IOC.ML.10.1.

The subspecies for some birds are different in Lombok and Sumba (some being potential splits, such as Wallacean Drongo and Elegant Pitta) but are not explicitly listed here.

1 = Seen, HO = Heard Only

No.	English Name	Latin Name	Lombok	Sumba
1	Orange-footed Scrubfowl	<i>Megapodius reinwardt</i>	1	1
2	Green Junglefowl	<i>Gallus varius</i>		1
3	Pacific Black Duck	<i>Anas superciliosa</i>		1
4	Mees's Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus meesi</i>		1
5	Tenggara Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia sumbawae</i>		1
6	Cave Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia linchi</i>	1	
7	Rusty-breasted Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis sepulcralis</i>		HO
8	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	1	
9	Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>		1
10	Little Cuckoo-dove	<i>Macropygia ruficeps</i>		1
11	Common Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	1	1
12	Barred Dove	<i>Geopelia maugeus</i>		1
13	Sumba Green Pigeon	<i>Treron teysmannii</i>		1
14	Red-naped Fruit Dove	<i>Ptilinopus dohertyi</i>		1
15	Black-naped Fruit Dove	<i>Ptilinopus melanospilus</i>	1	1
16	Green Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>		1
17	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		1
18	Sumba Buttonquail	<i>Turnix everetti</i>		1
19	Javan Plover	<i>Charadrius javanicus</i>		1
20	Long-toed Stint	<i>Calidris subminuta</i>		1
21	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		1
22	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>		1
23	Javan Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola speciosa</i>		1
24	Eastern Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus coromandus</i>		1
25	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>		1
26	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>		1
27	Intermediate Egret	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>		1
28	Brown Goshawk	<i>Accipiter fasciatus</i>		1
29	Spotted Harrier	<i>Circus assimilis</i>		1
30	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>		1
31	White-bellied Sea Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>		1
32	Rinjani Scops Owl	<i>Otus jolandae</i>	1	
33	Sumba Boobook	<i>Ninox rudolfi</i>		1
34	Little Sumba Hawk-owl	<i>Ninox sumbaensis</i>		1
35	Sumba Hornbill	<i>Rhyticeros everetti</i>		1
36	Collared Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus chloris</i>	1	1
37	Cinnamon-banded Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus australasia</i>		1

38	Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher	<i>Ceyx erithaca</i>		1
39	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>		1
40	Rainbow Bee-eater	<i>Merops ornatus</i>		1
41	Spotted Kestrel	<i>Falco moluccensis</i>		1
42	Yellow-crested Cockatoo	<i>Cacatua sulphurea</i>		1
43	Eclectus Parrot	<i>Eclectus roratus</i>		1
44	Red-cheeked Parrot	<i>Geoffroyus geoffroyi</i>		1
45	Great-billed Parrot	<i>Tanygnathus megalorynchos</i>		1
46	Marigold Lorikeet	<i>Trichoglossus capistratus</i>		1
47	Elegant Pitta	<i>Pitta elegans</i>	1	1
48	Sumba Myzomela	<i>Myzomela dammermani</i>		1
49	Helmeted Friarbird	<i>Philemon buceroides</i>		1
50	Scaly-crowned Honeyeater	<i>Lichmera lombokia</i>	1	
51	Indonesian Honeyeater	<i>Lichmera limbata</i>		1
52	Pale-shouldered Cicadabird	<i>Edolisoma dohertyi</i>		1
53	White-shouldered Triller	<i>Lalage sueurii</i>		1
54	Mangrove Whistler	<i>Pachycephala cinerea</i>	1	
55	Rusty-breasted Whistler	<i>Pachycephala fulvotincta</i>		1
56	Black-naped Oriole	<i>Oriolus chinensis</i>	1	1
57	Wallacean Drongo	<i>Dicrurus densus</i>	1	1
58	Arafura Fantail	<i>Rhipidura dryas</i>		1
59	Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>	1	
60	Blyth's Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone affinis</i>		1
61	Spectacled Monarch	<i>Symphysichrus trivirgatus</i>		1
62	Broad-billed Flycatcher	<i>Myiagra ruficollis</i>		1
63	Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>		1
64	Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>		1
65	Cinereous Tit	<i>Parus cinereus</i>	1	1
66	Horsfield's Bush Lark	<i>Mirafrja javanica</i>		
67	Sooty-headed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus aurigaster</i>		1
68	Yellow-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus goiavier</i>	1	
69	Striated Swallow	<i>Cecropis striolata</i>		1
70	Australian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus australis</i>		1
71	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	1	
72	Olive-backed Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sepium</i>	1	
73	Yellow-ringed White-eye	<i>Zosterops wallacei</i>		1
74	Lemon-bellied White-eye	<i>Zosterops chloris</i>	1	
75	Ashy-bellied White-eye	<i>Zosterops citrinella</i>		1
76	Short-tailed Starling	<i>Aplonis minor</i>		1
77	Javan Myna	<i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>		1
78	Chestnut-backed Thrush	<i>Geokichla dohertyi</i>		1
79	Sumba Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa segregata</i>		1
80	Russet-backed Jungle Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis oscillans</i>		1
81	Rufous-chested Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula dumetoria</i>	1	
82	Sumba Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula harterti</i>		1
83	Pied Bush Chat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>		1
84	Thick-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum agile</i>		1
85	Blue-cheeked Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum maugei</i>	1	

86	Blood-breasted Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum sanguinolentum</i>		1
87	Brown-throated Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes malacensis</i>		1
88	Olive-backed Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris jugularis</i>	1	
89	Apricot-breasted Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris buettikoferi</i>		1
90	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	1	1
91	Zebra Finch	<i>Taeniopygia guttata</i>		1
92	Javan Munia	<i>Lonchura leucogastroides</i>	1	
93	Black-faced Munia	<i>Lonchura molucca</i>		1
94	Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	1	
95	Pale-headed Munia	<i>Lonchura pallida</i>	1	